An Analysis of Product-Fact Versus Psychosocial Appeals in Advertising: An Application of the Theory and Methods of the Behavioral Sciences to a Business Problem

By

DAVID W. NYLEN

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND THE APPROACH

This investigation is designed to present analysis at two levels of thinking. It is directed first at a business problem of long standing and of both practical and theoretical importance. The problem to be examined concerns the effectiveness of rational versus emotional advertising appeals.

This analysis also concerns a second-level problem--the source and methodology for the solution of business problems. It attempts to follow the scientific approach to problem solution. But more particularly, the dominant characteristic of the analysis is that it draws upon the behavioral sciences both as a source of theory and as a source of methodology. Thus at the second level of thinking, the analysis of the business problem initially posed can be viewed as an extended example of the potential of utilizing behavioral science concepts and techniques in applied business problems.

In the section which follows an overview is given of the approach to be taken in this analysis.

The Overall Approach-- The Scientific Method

Criticism of the traditional business research approach

This research utilizes the scientific approach as the guiding framework for analysis. In so doing, it attempts to avoid the shortcomings of traditional business research noted by Rigby. "Traditional business research has been limited to little more than fact gathering and reporting, using familiar data-gathering techniques such as the survey, interview, questionnaire and sample."[1]

This research tradition has arisen, according to Rigby, because business administration has been largely concerned with solving immediate problems rather than contributing to knowledge. Says Rigby, "When it becomes necessary or desirable for business administration to contribute to knowledge, it should proceed as though it were a science."[2] In proceeding as a science, the business researcher uses existing theory to build hypotheses that control and direct the research. "A process is controlled to the extent that it is efficiently directed toward the attainment of desired objectives."[3] It is this exercise of control that differentiates

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[1] Paul H. Rigby, Conceptual Foundations of Business Research (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 4.

[2] Ibid., p. 1.

[3] Russell L. Ackoff, Scientific Method: Optimizing Applied Research Decisions (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1962), p. 3. Quotation italicized in the original.

the scientific approach from "fact gathering" and it is from its controlled nature that the scientific approach gains its superiority as a method of inquiry.

Steps in the scientific approach

In addition to being a controlled research approach, the scientific method can be characterized as being systematic. The specific steps in the scientific approach to a problem have been variously stated, but traditionally the steps follow the sequence of observation, generalization, and experimentation.[1] The chronology will be restated in terms more closely related to this analysis as (1) problem definition, (2) hypothesis formulation, and (3) testing of the hypothesis.

As used here, a problem may be stated as a question concerning the relationship between two or more variables. That is, the problem is a question that asks, what is the effect of variable "X" on variable "Y"? As part of the problem definition, the variables must, of course, be defined.

The term hypothesis, as used here, is a proposed or conjectural relationship between the variables named in the problem. The hypothesis proposes that a specified change in variable "X" will result in a specified change in variable "Y."

The third step, testing of the hypothesis, is concerned with gathering data--as directed or controlled by the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

hypothesis--to test the relationship between the variables that has been proposed. The hypothesis may be tested directly or by implication, but in either case testing as used here means putting the hypothesized relation to empirical test.

It should be acknowledged that the steps presented here need not, in practice, occur in this sequence. Indeed, the steps probably occur more often simultaneously and may often take the form of a cycle rather than a one-time sequence. The steps, however, are presented here as a sequence in order to aid organizational clarity.

Organization of the analysis

The three steps of the scientific approach discussed above provide the organizational framework for the body of this analysis. The three major sections of the analysis, which follow this introductory chapter, are concerned with (1) definition of the problem, (2) formulation of a hypothesis, and (3) a test of the hypothesis. The concluding section of the analysis discusses implications of the study.

Before launching into the main body of the analysis, the general procedures to be followed in each of the three main sections of the analysis are described. The way in which behavioral science knowledge and techniques are applied is noted for each section.

Approach to Definition of the Problem

The problem and its importance

The business problem to be examined in this analysis is the relative effectiveness of rational and emotional advertising appeals. This question has been a recurring issue in both advertising theory and practice. The subject is believed to be an important one both from the standpoint of its potential to contribute to the body of advertising knowledge and as a problem that currently troubles advertising practitioners.

It would be difficult to prove conclusively that the problem to be analyzed is an important one, but two substantiating observations are offered. The first is that the issue of rational versus emotional appeals has reappeared as a major question in both the advertising and mass communication literature from the earliest time that these fields of knowledge were written and published. As measured by the pages devoted to the issue, the subject must be ranked as a major one. This history of the problem will be traced in detail later when the problem and the variables are defined more fully. It should be noted here, however, that despite the long history of the issue, the contemporary literature does not indicate that the problem is "solved"; in fact, there is not even unanimity as to the definition of the problem.

A second observation bearing on the importance of the issue comes from the writer's eight years of experience

as an advertising practitioner. It was observed during these years that the relative desirability of emotional versus rational appeals was a pressing and a frequent question both strategically and creatively. It is perhaps true that because some of these observations were during the height of the motivation research controversy, abnormal attention was focused on this issue. However, even after this period, the question continued to occur and seemed no more resolved than previously.

At the second level of thinking, this analysis is concerned with the usefulness of the behavioral sciences--theory and methods--in solving business problems. Although numerous other writers in marketing have argued the desirability of borrowing from this source, this hardly seems necessary in this instance. Since one purpose of this total analysis is to test the applied usefulness of behavioral science theory and technique, the outcome of the analysis will provide a measure of the importance of the question. If it proves possible to answer the advertising problem by using the behavioral sciences, the importance of the approach will be supported.

Identification of the variables

The task of defining the problem will concentrate on identification and specification of the variables. This will be done by tracing the evolution of the problem through the literature. Two general bodies of information will be used

in this problem definition--advertising literature and behavioral sciences, particularly mass communications theory. This will be the first instance in this analysis in which the usefulness of behavioral science findings will be explored.

Ultimately, three variables will be identified in the problem definition: appeals, conditions, and effects. The position will be developed, from the review of existing theory, that the proper definition of the problem is not, "Which is more effective, rational or emotional appeals?" Rather, the problem as finally developed will be, "Under what conditions are rational appeals more effective than emotional appeals?" and "Under what conditions are emotional appeals more effective than rational appeals?" The variables, then, are: (1) appeals and (2) conditions, the independent variables, interacting to produce (3) effects, the dependent variable.

The main thrust of the problem definition section will be to define emotional and rational appeals. The nature of the "conditions" is a main concern of the hypothesis and will be developed in that section.

Approach to Hypothesis Development

The major concern of the hypothesis development section will be to examine the interaction between the appeals, defined earlier, and various conditions as this interaction determines effectiveness. It will be hypothesized that certain appeal-condition combinations will prove more effective than others.

The formulation of a hypothesis at this stage is in keeping with the scientific approach. The procedure used in formulating the hypothesis is also in keeping with the scientific approach since it utilizes and builds on existing theory. The behavioral sciences provide the main body of knowledge that is utilized in forming the hypothesis. This is the second and most important application of the body of behavioral knowledge to this business problem.

It will be proposed, as the hypothesis is developed, that one important set of conditions that interacts with appeals is consumer goals. Based on the analysis of behavioral knowledge, it will be hypothesized that when an appeal is congruent with a consumer's goal, she will find the information in the appeal useful, hence she will accept and act upon the information in the appeal with the result that the appeal is effective.

This hypothesis will be developed by the definition of a series of related propositions which lead in logical fashion to the hypothesis. Each of the propositions is supported by existing knowledge, mainly from the behavioral sciences.

Approach to Testing the Hypothesis

The experimental method

The third major section of this analysis will be a test of the hypothesis. The test method to be used will be

an experiment conducted in a laboratory or controlled setting rather than in the field. This approach is both faithful to the scientific approach and reliant upon techniques utilized by the behavioral sciences.

The experimental method is closely identified with the scientific approach. Ferber, the noted marketing researcher, observes:

> . . . there is agreement that experiments are a sort of prototype, or ideal, of the scientific method. At least in the idealized version, the experiment that isolates and establishes control over each variable and produces results which can be reproduced or verified by other tests, is accepted as being fully scientific.[1]

Ferber notes control and reproducibility as two important attributes of the experimental method. A third attribute of the experimental method gives it unique importance as a technique and gives it great potential for business research. That is, the experimental method has the power to indicate causation. In testing relationships in business, most other data gathering methods reduce analytically to an indication of correlation. Such findings cannot validly be used to prove either the existence or direction of causation. Yet it is the question of "what causes what" that is the heart of the search for new knowledge. The strength of the experimental method is that, if adequately

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[1]Robert Ferber, Donald F. Blankertz, and Sidney Hollander, Jr., Marketing Research (New York: The Ronald Press, 1964), p. 61.

controlled, it does indicate causative relationships and the direction of causation.

Application to business research

There has been a reluctance to apply the experimental method to business research. Business researchers have pointed out that it is not possible to establish control in business research to the same extent that it is in the physical sciences because the variables in business problems involve human beings. It is in the solution of this difficulty that the behavioral sciences will again be used as a source of borrowing. Experimental evidence concerning human behavior is the basis for the preponderant share of behavioral science knowledge. Techniques to cope with the problems of controlling behavioral experiments have been developed by the behavioral sciences. The testing approach for this analysis will be developed by application of these techniques. yes

Again in the hypothesis testing section the thinking will be at two levels. First, the test will be designed to shed some light on the validity of the hypothesis. But second, and perhaps more important because of the limits of the actual experiment, the experiment will be designed to illustrate the feasibility of applying this behavioral technique to a business problem.

CHAPTER II

PROBLEM DEFINITION-- RATIONAL VERSUS EMOTIONAL ADVERTISING APPEALS

In approaching the question of the relative effectiveness of rational versus emotional advertising appeals, the initial step is to provide an adequately specific definition of the problem. In particular, the terms "emotional" and "rational" must be defined.

As noted earlier, the issue of emotional versus rational appeals is not a new one. From the earliest advertising texts up to the present, many writers have advocated emotional appeals or rational appeals as being a generally superior method of persuasion. Similarly, in the literature of mass communications theory, early experiments dealt with the question of which type of appeal--rational or emotional--was generally superior.

However, as the study of rational versus emotional appeals progressed, it became increasingly clear that neither emotional nor rational appeals are <u>generally</u> superior or <u>generally</u> inferior as a method of persuasion. Rather, it appears that in some situations or with some people rational appeals are more effective and in other cases emotional appeals are more effective.

An objective of this analysis is to define one set of conditions that determines the most effective appeal to use. That is, it will specify a condition under which a rational appeal would be most effective and a counter condition under which an emotional appeal would be most effective. It will be hypothesized, in a concept suggested as a complement to the marketing concept,[1] that the most effective choice between emotional and rational appeals depends upon the relative usefulness of the information to the consumer. The choice between emotional and rational appeals should be influenced by the information that the consumer feels he needs in order to solve his shopping problem.

An immediate and obvious difficulty with this preliminary problem statement is the question of definitions. What is an emotional appeal and what is a rational appeal? These definitions are crucial to this analysis and thus will be considered in depth as a first step in the analysis. Two sources will be used in a search for definitions. First the issue will be traced through the advertising literature to see what meanings have developed. Second, in keeping with the second level problem to be examined in this analysis, the behavioral sciences will be examined for contributions to the problem definition.

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[1]The marketing concept holds that marketers should develop and adjust products to meet consumer needs rather than try to bend consumers to existing or productively convenient products.

Three Meanings of Rational vs. Emotional Appeals in the Advertising Literature

From the early books on advertising in the 1920's up to the present day, advertising writers have distinguished between general types of advertising appeals. In most cases, the types of appeal have been expressed as rational versus emotional. But other terms have also been used and the terms "rational" and "emotional" appear to have different intended meanings from writer to writer. In the analysis of advertising literature that follows, three different meanings of emotional versus rational will be identified.

Early advertising writers

In reviewing the advertising and consumer behavior concepts of the early advertising writers, it is helpful to keep in mind two important influences on their thinking--first, the behavioristic psychological school, particularly of John B. Watson, and second, the writings of the classical economists.[1] It was from behaviorism that advertisers got the notion of the docile, compliant consumer who was easily

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[1]Wroe Alderson, "Advertising Strategy and Theories of Motivation," in Motivation and Marketing Behavior, ed. by Robert Ferber and Hugh G. Wales (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1958), pp. 11-21 discusses the psychological foundations of early advertising and Robert Bartels, The Development of Marketing Thought (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1962) outlines the economic influence on early marketers.

induced to respond by tapping his basic emotions; consumers were seen as responding directly to stimuli such as advertising appeals. One of the borrowings from classical economics was the concept of rationality--consumer behavior was classified as rational when it met the economic criteria and not rational when it did not. Both the rationality concept and the stimulus-response idea are influential in the early writers' classifications of advertising appeals which will be reviewed next.

Walter Dill Scott.- A psychologist who turned to the study of advertising, Scott wrote one of the first major works on advertising in 1917.[1] In it he distinguished between two types of advertising copy--suggestive and reason-why. Reason-why appeals, said Scott, should be used when the purchase is a considered one--the result of decision and choice; when the choice is impulsive, then suggestive copy is more effective.

Two recurring ideas emerge from Scott's concept: first, advertising appeals should be complementary or parallel to consumer buying behavior; and second, a major variable in buying behavior that can be influenced by advertising is the amount of purchase deliberation. This latter idea forms the basis for the first definition of rational versus emotional

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[1]Walter Dill Scott, The Psychology of Advertising (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1917), see especially pp. 80-94.

appeals; rational appeals induce deliberation while emotional appeals induce impulsive behavior.

Tipper and Associates.- An early and influential text by Tipper, Hollingworth, Hotchkiss, and Parsons expanded upon the classes of appeal suggested in Scott by listing four appeal categories--reflex, short circuit, long circuit, and rationalizing.[1] Of the four, reflex (attention getting) and rationalizing (justification) appeals are given little discussion. Long circuit appeals, so called because they take a long time to work, are reason-why copy (as in Scott) containing argument, persuasion, inviting comparison, and giving sales points. Short circuit appeals (because they work quickly) are "definite and concentrated appeals to one or more specific instincts, feelings, emotions, or ideals of the reader."[2] Response to short circuit copy is instinctive rather than reasoned.[3] The distinction that the authors seem to make in these definitions is in agreement with Scott: the consumer is sometimes the deliberative, economic man and sometimes the impulsive, instinctive, behavioristic man.

The authors, however, then add the new thought that the choice between long circuit and short circuit appeals

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[1]Harry Tipper, and others, The Principles of Advertising (New York: The Ronald Press, 1920), pp. 75-81.

[2]Ibid., pp. 75, 77.

[3]Ibid., p. 153.

can be determined by the type of product to be advertised: advertisements for personal use items (jewelry), family entertainment items, personal safety articles (insurance), food and smoking materials purchased for personal enjoyment, and gift items should use short circuit appeals; articles for business use, building purposes, accessories, investments and articles in fields where competition is keen should use long circuit appeals.[1] Whereas Scott saw the choice between types of copy appeal determined by the degree of shopping deliberation, Tipper and his associates saw the choice determined by the type of product. Although they do not go further to analyze the two groups of products, one interpretation suggests itself. The products included in the long circuit group are more valued for their instrumental use--for what the products themselves will do. The products in the short circuit group tend to be valued less for their performance than for what they say about the purchaser as a person or the prestige that they lend to the purchaser. This interpretation of Tipper's product categories is the initial basis for the second definition of emotional versus rational appeals. Rational appeals in this definition are those that present facts about the instrumental benefits of the product; emotional appeals present personal or prestige benefits that will accrue to the purchaser.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 75-81.

One exception to this interpretation is the inclusion of highly competitive articles in the long circuit category. The authors state that an "important part of the work of reason-why copy is to make the reader choose the advertised article in preference to a competitor's article."[1] This thought relates directly to the third definition to be amplified later of primary versus selective demand stimulation.

Daniel Starch.- In an advertising text published in 1923, Daniel Starch classified appeals as argumentative or suggestive, defined very much along the lines of Scott.[2] However, his analysis of factors determining the choice of argumentative or suggestive appeals is a helpful amplification. The classification below is derived from Starch's more complete chart:

Factor	Argumentative appeal when purchase or product is:	Suggestive appeal when purchase or product is:
1. Buying process	deliberate	impulsive
2. Frequency of Purchase	considered	habitual
3. Familiarity	new product	familiar product
4. Price	high priced	low priced
5. Competition	highly competitive	non-competitive
6. Complexity	complex	simple
7. Sentiment	utility item	personally sentimental

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[1] Ibid., p. 142.

[2] Daniel Starch, Principles of Advertising (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1923), pp. 369-372.

This list can be seen to include criteria relating to each of the three definitions now identified from the early writings. The buying process and frequency of purchase factors are comparable to Scott's deliberation criterion. The familiarity factor and the competition factor are related to the suggestion by Tipper and associates, later to be defined by Copeland of primary and selective demand stimulation. Finally, #1 the sentiment factor parallels the instrumental versus prestige benefits criteria suggested by Tipper's product categories.

Melvin T. Copeland.- Unlike Scott, Starch, and Hollingworth, Melvin Copeland was not educated as a psychologist, but as an economist. His approach to the question of appeals was highly empirical. He believed, as did Scott, that the appeal to be used in an advertisement depended upon the motives that lead a person to buy the product.[1] In 1924, he studied 936 current consumer advertisements to determine what buying motives were being appealed to. The first distinction that he noted was between primary and selective appeals. A primary appeal was designed to sell a general kind or classification of article whereas a selective appeal was directed to selling a particular brand.

Another classification of appeals that Copeland made in his analysis was rational versus emotional.[2] Rational

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[1]Melvin Thomas Copeland, Principles of Merchandising (Chicago and New York: A. W. Shaw, 1926), pp. 158-162.

[2]Ibid., pp. 162-163.

appeals, he stated, were directed to rational motives such as dependability, durability, and economy. Deliberation and weighing of advantages and disadvantages attended these decisions. Emotional appeals, by contrast, aroused the desires of consumers to satisfy their instincts, impulses, and emotions.

Copeland's definitions can be related and used to lend credence to the three appeal categories now defined. Copeland was the first to identify and define primary versus selective appeals which form a first approximation of the third classification of emotional versus rational appeals. Although Copeland specifically designates the primary-selective classification as distinct from the emotional-rational definition, it will develop that later writers propose a definition of emotional appeal that is very like Copeland's concept of primary appeal and a definition of rational appeal that is very much like Copeland's definition of selective appeal.

Copeland's stated definitions of emotional versus rational appeals show the influence of his economics training. The definitions seem to agree with Scott's classification based on deliberation versus impulse. However, a review of Copeland's application of the emotional-rational definitions in his study of then current advertisements reveals that his classification of appeals is based less on the degree of deliberation than on the nature of the benefit

promised.[1] For example, under the category of emotional advertisements he includes appeals to emulation, pride of appearance, and social achievement. These appear to be personal or prestige benefits. Under rational appeals, he includes dependability, durability, and economy. These appeals appear to relate directly to product performance. Thus Copeland's application of the terms emotional and rational seem to support the second definition of appeal categories--product benefits versus personal or prestige benefits.

Albert T. Poffenberger.- Another psychologist turned advertiser, Albert Poffenberger, wrote in 1926 that advertising appeals should be based on consumer wants or needs.[2] Wants, he adds, may be biological or they may be learned. Biological wants lead to instinctive behavior and can be stimulated by emotional appeals. Learned wants are habits and reasoned behavior, and they can be appealed to with reasoned appeals by inviting thought. The distinction that Poffenberger makes and which will be seen again in the writing of Hattwick is that emotional appeals relate to biological, instinctive behavior while rational appeals relate to learned behavior. This adds to Scott's deliberate versus

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[1] Ibid., pp. 178, 185.

[2] Albert T. Poffenberger, Psychology in Advertising (Chicago and New York: A. W. Shaw, 1926), pp. 25-41.

impulsive definition the thought that deliberation is equated with learned responses whereas impulsive behavior is biologically based.

Middle period writers-- 1930-1950

The middle period of advertising writers is rather arbitrarily established as extending from 1930, after the pioneering writers, until 1950, just before the appearance of the motivation research debate. The writings of this period have some unity in the fact that on the topic of advertising appeals it was a time of consolidation and elaboration rather than of new ideas. The writers were still highly influenced by a behavioristic notion of psychology and a notion of rationality that equated value with instrumental rather than psychological product benefits.

H. E. Burtt.- Writing in 1938, H. E. Burtt adopted the short-circuit/long-circuit classification.[1] As had others, Burtt classified all appeals that gave reasoned information about the product as long-circuit. Short-circuit appeals appear to include everything else--suggestion, reminder, creation of atmosphere or favorable associations, appeals to instincts, and appeals to acquired desires.[2]

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[1]H. E. Burtt, Psychology of Advertising (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1938), p. 52.

[2]Ibid., pp. 74-75, 93-94.

George B. Hotchkiss.- A co-author with Tipper, George Hotchkiss later wrote his own text that was widely used.[1] As some authors had before him, Hotchkiss described the psychological process involved in a sale as entailing four consecutive steps: (1) attention (and interest),(2) desire,(3) conviction,(4) action. Unlike his predecessors, however, Hotchkiss related the classification of appeals to the steps in the sales process. Some ads, he stated, may be a complete sales appeal trying to lead the buyer through all four stages. More often, ads concentrate on one of the steps. Ads that concentrate on arousing desire are emotional or human interest ads or short circuit ads. But if the desire is already present, the ad can concentrate on showing how the particular product will satisfy the desire. These are reason-why or long circuit ads.

Hotchkiss' explanation is of particular interest because his categorization of appeals as desire-arousing and desire-satisfying appears closely related, although in different language, to Copeland's classification of primary versus selective appeals. Primary appeals to Copeland were those aimed at stimulating demand for a general category of goods and were used especially for new product categories. This appears very similar to Hotchkiss' definition of emotional appeal as one that concentrated on arousing desire. However,

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[1]George B. Hotchkiss, An Outline of Advertising (New York: Macmillan, 1940), pp. 194-202.

according to Hotchkiss, if the desire is already present, reason-why appeals are used to show how a particular product will satisfy the existing desire. This appears similar to Copeland's selective appeal which he defined as concentrating on directing the consumer to a particular brand, the general demand for the product category having already been established. The third category of emotional versus rational appeals can now be restated as involving desire-arousing versus desire-satisfying appeals.

Neil H. Borden.- In his monumental work, The Economic Effects of Advertising,[1] Neil Borden makes a distinction between rational and emotional that shows the gradual development of the definition of advertising appeals based on the nature of consumer's needs. "Consumers are not guided solely by what may be termed rational motives, i.e., they do not think solely in terms of such practical things as durability, efficiency, dependability, and economy . . . consumer buying is [also] likely to be influenced by desires to satisfy many personal whims and wishes which often have strong emotional character."[2] This clarification from Borden seems to support the definition of advertising appeals as product performance or instrumental benefits versus personal or prestige benefits.

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[1]Neil H. Borden, The Economic Effects of Advertising (Chicago: Richard D. Irwin, 1942).

[2]Ibid., pp. 658-659.

Melvin S. Hattwick.- A psychologist and advertising practitioner, Melvin Hattwick wrote a widely quoted book on advertising in 1950.[1] He hews to the behavioristic notion of appealing to the basic wants because this will "easily arouse" a drive that the person will want to satisfy immediately. These are what Hattwick terms emotional appeals. The alternative is to appeal to the secondary or learned wants such as bargains, economy, dependability, or efficiency. This is essentially a statement, although in clearer form of Poffenberger's classification of appeals and elaborates on Scott's distinction between deliberate and instinctive or impulsive behavior.

Lucas and Britt.- The last of the middle period writers to be considered, Lucas and Britt identify three pairs of appeal categories which they term: (1) positive versus negative, (2) consumer motives versus product attributes, and (3) emotional versus rational.[2]

The contrast between positive and negative appeals was also recognized by many of the early writers. However, it has generally been agreed to be a difference in mode of expression rather than of content. That is, the same copy appeal (content) can be expressed positively or negatively.

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[1]Melvin S. Hattwick, How to Use Psychology for Better Advertising (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1950), pp. 18-24.

[2]Darrell Blaine Lucas and Steuart Henderson Britt, Advertising Psychology and Research (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), pp. 155-187.

The other two categories, however, can be related to the definitions suggested earlier. Lucas and Britt's consumer motives versus product attributes category is comparable to the desire-arousing versus desire-satisfying distinction made by Hotchkiss. Consumer motive advertising, according to Lucas and Britt, is designed to arouse motives, but if the motive is already aroused, then the advertisement emphasizes features of the specific product.[1] The authors clearly include in this pair of appeal categories the idea of primary versus selective appeals. They state that the consumer motives approach is frequently used in new product advertising.[2] This is confirmation of the earlier suggestion that the classification of emotion-arousing versus emotion-satisfying appeals seems to include or be related to the concept of primary versus selective appeals.

Lucas and Britt's final category, emotional versus rational, seems a conglomeration of the deliberate versus impulsive categories of Scott and the instrumental versus personal satisfaction category derived from Tipper. Rational appeals, say Lucas and Britt, are concerned with the product itself (an instrumental appeal) and they take a long time to work (deliberation).[3] Emotional appeals

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 160. [2] _Ibid_., p. 157.

[3] _Ibid_., pp. 181-182.

stimulate urges and feelings and the audience responds immediately and automatically (impulse).[1] Emotional appeals are used for products giving sentimental or sensory pleasure (personal/prestige benefits).[2]

Summary.- It might be helpful to briefly summarize the lines of thinking that have thus far been uncovered. A basic proposition that appears explicitly or implicitly in all works that have been considered is that categories of advertising appeals are parallel or complementary to categories of consumer behavior or consumer needs. Thus advertising appeals can be categorized either in terms of their own content or in terms of the behavior/need category to which they are directed.

Using this criterion, the general category of rational versus emotional appeals appears in advertising writings to have at least three different meanings:

1. Appeals designed to induce deliberate versus impulsive purchase behavior,
2. appeals presenting instrumental product benefits versus appeals presenting the personal or prestige gratifying benefits of the product, and
3. appeals designed to arouse desires versus those presenting the means to satisfy desires; or primary versus selective demand stimulation.

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[1] Ibid., p. 172.

[2] Ibid., p. 174.

The motivation research controversy

The middle and late 1950's was the period of controversy over motivation research and marked a turning point in advertising thinking. The introduction of motivation research techniques was important in itself, but a more important result was that it turned advertisers toward further examination of the behavioral sciences and their potential contribution to advertising.

What Was Motivation Research? - Motivation research was not the introduction of behavioral science to advertising or marketing as some have stated, for, as has been noted, many of the early advertising theorists were themselves psychologists and they applied the psychological knowledge of their day to advertising. The school of thinking that most influenced the early writers and those that followed was behaviorism. By contrast, motivation research was based on the introduction of a new school of thought--clinical psychology. Because it was based on these theoretical foundations, motivation research emphasized personal attributes as variables rather than environmental factors.[1]

A different and more limited view of motivation research concluded that it focused mainly on the introduction of certain research techniques borrowed from clinical

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[1]Francesco M. Nicosia, Consumer Decision Processes (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 115-116, contains a good retrospective review of the contributions and shortcomings of motivation research.

psychology--notably depth interviewing and projective techniques.[1] But this is probably too narrow an interpretation. The need for these research techniques arose because of the motivation researchers' assumptions about consumer behavior. The concept of the buying process that emerged from motivation research was that it is a matching of a person's self-image with the image of a product or a brand.[2] Inasmuch as a major portion of this motivation was viewed as unconscious (a borrowed Freudian concept) people were believed unable to explain their behavior; hence the need for depth and projective research techniques.

The reason for considering at this point motivation research concepts and the controversy surrounding them is that a principal concern of motivation research was rational versus emotional buying behavior and, consequently, rational versus emotional advertising appeals.

Motivation research view of emotional versus rational.- A basic assertion of the motivation researchers was that much, perhaps most, consumer purchase behavior was emotional rather than rational. Pierre Martineau, a pioneer practitioner and advocate of motivation research, summarized the point as follows:

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[1]See, for example, George Horsley Smith, Motivation Research in Advertising and Marketing (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954).

[2]Joseph W. Newman, Motivation Research and Marketing Management (Boston: Harvard University, Graduate School of Business Administration, Division of Research, 1957), p. 201.

> The Logical Man and the Economic Man are fictional. They don't exist. Beneath the mask of rationality that our society teaches us to wear, the consumer is a living, breathing, feeling individual. He is not a technical expert. He wants far more from life than bargains. And his behavior stems more often from emotional and nonrational causes than from logic.[1]

It is important at this point to specify what meaning the term "emotional" had for the motivation researchers. Emotional buying behavior in the motivation research scheme is comparable to that in the second category defined earlier--purchase to gain personal or prestige benefits. Martineau describes emotional buying behavior by saying that "everything we buy helps us to convey to others the kind of people we are--helps us to identify ourselves to the world at large."[2] In other words, emotional buying behavior is concerned with self-enhancement as opposed to rational buying behavior which is concerned with, as Martineau phrases it, the practical and functional uses of products.

It follows from this definition of emotional behavior that emotional appeals are those that promise psychological benefits to the buyer. Rational appeals convey factual information about the product.

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[1]Pierre Martineau, Motivation in Advertising (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 201.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 197.

Controversy over motivation research.- Motivation researchers' strongly expressed view that most purchases were dominated by psychological goals and that these goals were largely unconscious or inexpressible drew criticism from both practitioners and theorists.

Rosser Reeves, highly successful copywriter and creative head of a major advertising agency, wrote a book in 1961 based upon the copy research findings of the agency.[1] Reeves strongly rebuts Martineau's position. Successful campaigns, reports Reeves, are those based on a "unique selling proposition," that is, a strong product claim that is unique to the brand, a demonstrable product difference.[2] Reeves clearly advocates the rational approach. He contrasts his approach as copy logic as opposed to Martineau's advocacy of visual symbols to establish contact with the subconscious of the consumer.[3]

The supporters of a rational copy approach also found support from a school of psychological theory. Whereas motivation research drew heavily from clinical psychologists' belief that behavior is determined primarily by unconscious goals and the need for self-enhancement, the rationalist opponents drew on Gestalt psychology that, by contrast, saw

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[1]Rosser Reeves, Reality in Advertising (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961).

[2]Ibid., pp. 46-48.

[3]Ibid., pp. 77-83.

behavior as goal-directed activity in which resources were rationally used to attain conscious ends.[1] With goods used as means to gaining conscious, specific goals, the role of advertising appeals becomes informational and educational.

It is not the purpose of this review of the motivation research controversy to pick a winner between the emotional approach and the rational approach. Instead, the position being developed is that both rational and emotional consumer behavior occur depending upon various conditions. This examination of the motivation research controversy supports two points: 1) there is substantial support, both from advertisers and from psychological thinking, for a rational view of consumer behavior and for an emotional view of consumer behavior; appeals directed to these behavior patterns can likewise be termed emotional or rational; 2) the meaning of the terms "emotional" and "rational" in the motivation research context are equivalent to and thereby give support to the second of the three categories suggested earlier; emotional purchase behavior or an emotional appeal is directed toward psychological enhancement of the buyer; rational purchase behavior or a rational appeal is concerned with the use of a product in terms of the way that the product itself performs.

<u>Current advertising writers</u>

The trend in advertising thinking since the period of the motivation research controversy has been toward

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[1] Alderson, "Advertising Strategy," p. 15.

broader investigation and borrowing from the behavioral sciences and, at the same time, toward a more balanced view of rational versus emotional behavior. Alderson in 1965 noted a turning away from "the notion of providing psychotherapy as free goods while marketing products through mass media."[1] David Ogilvy, noted copywriter and founder of a highly successful advertising agency noted for its advanced notions of creativity, paid due homage in his 1963 book to the importance of brand personality and brand image. (His agency had prepared the Schweppes Tonic and the Hathaway Shirt eyepatch campaigns acclaimed by the motivation researchers.) However, he advises a rather straightforward, informational approach to copywriting: "Your most important job is to decide what you are going to say about your product, what benefit you are going to promise," and "If . . . you are advertising a product which has a great many different qualities to recommend it, write long copy: the more you tell, the more you sell."[2]

Perhaps one result of the absorbtion of motivation research into the mainstream of marketing thinking has been a greater tendency to define emotional consumer behavior and emotional advertising appeals in terms of motivation research concepts, that is, as focusing on the psychological

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[1]Wroe Alderson, Dynamic Marketing Behavior (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1965), p. 142.

[2]David Ogilvy, Confessions of an Advertising Man (New York: Atheneum, 1963), pp. 93, 108.

benefits of the product. The behavioristic notion of tapping impulses and instincts was displaced by this newer concept. Otto Kleppner, in the latest edition of his widely used textbook provides a current description of emotional appeals:

> In the factual approach we sought to explain and interpret facts about a product. But there is a world of values that have no yardstick, that can never be weighed, that can only be experienced. People often buy products for the satisfaction and joy to be experienced from their use. We cannot find these qualities by cutting the product apart and seeing what is inside it. Rather, we must look into the reader's life to perceive how his life or that of someone in whom he is interested, somehow, somewhere will be enriched through this product. This launches us on an imaginative exploration of emotional possibilities.[1]

A second trend, also spurred by the motivation research controversy, has been broadened borrowing from the behavioral sciences. As noted earlier, the base of motivational research was primarily clinical psychology. The success of the motivation researchers in their borrowing encouraged investigation by marketers into other behavioral areas. The sudden mushrooming of marketing-oriented books of readings from the social sciences is one evidence of this trend. There have also been new advertising texts specifically incorporating behavioral science concepts, such

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[1]Otto Kleppner, Advertising Procedure (5th ed.; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1966), p. 97.

as Brink and Kelley,[1] and a few efforts to resynthesize marketing knowledge based on behavioral science concepts; for example, works by Nicosia and Bauer and his associates.[2]

In terms of rational versus emotional appeals, one result of the wider borrowing from the behavioral sciences has been a broadening of the concept of an emotional appeal. Earlier the term "emotional" was defined in terms of psychological benefits--those aimed at enhancing the individual's self-concept. But other behavioral science concepts suggested the idea of social benefits (such as conformity, identification, belonging) that consumers may try to achieve by their purchase behavior. Thus the idea of emotional behavior has been gradually enlarged to include psychological _and_ social benefits. Note that this new definition of "emotional" now includes both biological and learned wants as Poffenberger and Hattwick defined them. The idea of separating inborn from socially determined behavior as Poffenberger and Hattwich suggest seems a less meaningful and operationally less feasible concept than the instrumental versus psychosocial dichotomy.

The meaning of emotional versus rational appeals in the advertising literature

The purpose of this review of advertising literature has been to define more precisely the issue of emotional

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[1]Edward L. Brink and William T. Kelley, _The Management of Promotion_ (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

[2]Nicosia, _op. cit._, and Donald F. Cox, ed. _Risk Taking and Information Handling in Consumer Behavior_ (Boston: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business Administration, Harvard University, 1967).

versus rational advertising appeals. The findings can be summarized very briefly as follows:

1. The choice between emotional and rational appeals has a long and continuous history in advertising, appearing in the literature from the earliest writings up to the most current.

2. A general assumption is that categories of appeals parallel categories of consumer behavior. That is, emotional behavior calls for emotional appeals, whereas rational behavior calls for rational appeals. Thus the terms "emotional" and "rational" can be defined either in terms of behavior or in terms of the content of the advertising.

3. Three different meanings of the term "emotional versus rational" were found:

    - appeals designed to induce deliberate versus induce impulsive buying behavior,
    - appeals presenting instrumental product benefits versus appeals presenting psychological or social benefits, and
    - appeals designed to arouse desires versus those offering the means to satisfy existing desires.

4. Of the three emotional versus rational issues identified, the second--instrumental versus psycho-social benefits--has become the more dominant problem, especially with the introduction of further knowledge from the behavioral sciences.

Rational Versus Emotional Appeals--Evidence from the Behavioral Sciences

The behavioral sciences as a source of borrowing

The advances made by the motivation researchers gave impetus to further exploration of the behavioral teachings of the behavioral sciences by marketers. Advertising theorists have found that the work by social psychologists in attitude formation and change and the work in mass communication have been particularly applicable. New texts such as Promotion by Tillman and Kirkpatrick and Promotion: A Behavioral View by Boyd and Levy have been organized around the concepts of mass communication theory.[1] There have also been a number of research applications such as those by Bauer and his associates and a recent rash of attempted applications of cognitive dissonance theory.

It should be noted that there are limitations to the applicability of the findings of these behavioral studies to advertising practice. First, the issues that have been studied by behavioral scientists have for the most part not been concerned with attitudes or behavior toward products or purchasing. The focus has tended to be on social and political issues such as voting behavior and racial prejudice.

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[1]Rollie Tillman and C. A. Kirkpatrick, Promotion: Persuasive Communication in Marketing (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, 1958). Harper W. Boyd, Jr., and Sidney J. Levy, Promotion: A Behavioral View (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967).

Two limitations noted by Klapper in his review of mass communication findings are that often (1) neither the goals of the audience nor (2) the goals of the communicator are the same in the field of advertising as they are in many of the mass communication studies. Concerning the goals of the audience, Klapper states, "The goals of . . . advertising and the psychological significance to the audience member of the decisions involved are often quite unlike the goals and decisions involved in the kind of persuasive communications here discussed."[1] It will later be suggested that consumers' buying behavior is attended by both purchase goals and information needs. The relevance of findings from studies in other fields will depend in part upon whether similar goals and needs appear to have existed in the study situation.

Concerning the goal of the advertiser versus that of the behavioral scientist, Wiebe notes, "the seller of commodities is basically interested in getting as many people as possible to engage in a specified unit of overt behavior. This overt behavior is, with few exceptions, the purchase of his product. The social scientist often disavows the achievement of specified behavior as an objective."[2]

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[1]Joseph T. Klapper, The Effects of Mass Communications (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1960), p. xi.

[2]Gerhardt Wiebe, "Merchandising Commodities and Citizenship on Television," Public Opinion Quarterly, XV (Winter 1951-52), 681-682.

In other words, the social scientist often seeks attitude change whereas the advertiser seeks behavior change.

Another difference, suggested by Bauer, is the level of response expected or considered successful by the advertiser as compared to the behavioral scientist.[1] In the experiments reported by behavioral scientists, frequently the goal is to convert a majority or a large percentage of the subjects. By contrast, marketers may have a commercially successful promotion if they convert as little as one per cent of the total market. VERY GOOD

A further limitation of behavioral science findings concerns the research techniques used. A wide variety of methods has, of course, been used, but experiments conducted using college students as subjects form a large part of the findings. In these cases, the generality of the findings must be viewed with caution.

And finally, there is the feeling among some marketing practitioners that each marketing problem must be dealt with individually. Allen Greenberg, Director of Research at Doyle, Dane, Bernbach advertising agency, believes that

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[1]Raymond A. Bauer, "The Obstinate Audience: The Influence Process from the Point of View of Social Communication," American Psychologist, XIX (May, 1964) 319-328.

advertising problems deal with unique instances and that mass communications principles even if largely true may not be true in the particular instance the advertiser is concerned with.[1]

Despite these limitations, the theoretical findings from the behavioral sciences may be of great value. The reason can be seen by contrast with research conducted by business, another potential source of general findings. Business research tends to be particularized and is usually privileged information. Whatever its limitations, research findings from the behavioral sciences usually attempt to generalize rather than particularize and the findings are generally published rather than confidential.

Rational versus emotional appeals in mass communication theory

The topic of rational versus emotional appeals is one frequently discussed in mass communication theory and is supported by the findings from a substantial number of experiments. As in the case of the review of the advertising literature, these findings will be examined here to determine what meaning is attached to the terms "emotional" and "rational." The experimental findings and proposed generalizations from this field will not be reviewed at this time, but will be drawn upon where relevant in later chapters.

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[1]Allen Greenberg, "Is Communications Research Really Worthwhile?" Journal of Marketing, XXXI (January, 1967), 48-50.

Early experimental studies.- An early study that has received wide attention was Hartmann's field experiment on the comparative effectiveness of emotional and rational political leaflets in the 1935 election in Allentown, Pennsylvania.[1] In the experiment, Hartmann divided the city into three districts; one received emotional leaflets supporting the Socialist party; a second received rational leaflets supporting the same party; and a third control area received no leaflets.

Germane to this discussion is a comparison of the content of the emotional leaflet and that of the rational one. However, even though the leaflet texts are reprinted in full in the report of the experiment, it is not totally clear from them what the terms "emotional" and "rational" mean. The emotional leaflet is emotion-arousing in the sense that it raises the possibility of a "better life." It also offers need satisfaction, proposing Socialism as a means of better providing for one's children, ending poverty, and avoiding war. These benefits, it is true, are ones that in common parlance are termed emotional issues, but desiring these benefits also seems rational in almost any sense of the word. The rational leaflet was in the form of a self-administered intelligence test made up of

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[1]George W. Hartmann, "A Field Experiment on the Comparative Effectiveness of 'Emotional' and 'Rational' Political Leaflets in Determining Election Results," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXI (April, 1936), 99-114.

generally agreeable statements, but which maneuvered the reader into a self-demonstration of Socialist sympathies. The content is rational in the sense that it leads the reader through a series of logical arguments. It might be, however, that tricking the reader into a position supporting Socialism was emotion-arousing.

Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, commenting on Hartmann's study, see the same difficulty. The problem with the study, they state, is that both the emotional and the rational appeals may have had an effect on motives; the effective content stimuli cannot be identified. The terms "emotional" and "rational" do not have operational definitions in the study.[1]

Another study of this period by Menefree and Granneberg exposed students to emotional and logical communications on foreign policy.[2] However, the meaning of "emotional" and "rational" is no more certain in this study than in the prior one.

Fear-arousing studies.- The meaning of "emotional" appeal in mass communication theory was substantially clarified by a famous study conducted by Janis and Feshbach in

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[1]Carl I. Hovland, Irving L. Janis, and Harold H. Kelley, Communication and Persuasion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 58.

[2]Selden C. Menefree and Audrey G. Granneberg, "Propaganda and Opinions on Foreign Policy," The Journal of Social Psychology, XI (May, 1940), 393-404.

1953.[1] This study was designed not to contrast emotional with rational appeals, but to evaluate the effectiveness of various levels of intensity of emotional appeals. In this case, the term "emotional" appeal was clearly defined as, "arousal of fear or anxiety by depicting potential danger to which the audience might be exposed" if it did not follow the recommendations advocated by the communicator.[2] In the study, three different intensities of fear appeal were presented to groups of high school students in communications on dental hygiene. The fear manipulation was achieved by describing the potential dangers to health that could ensue if the subject failed to follow recommended dental procedures.

The Janis and Feshbach study stimulated a number of additional experiments further exploring the effects of fear appeals.[3] Although fear is only one of many possible emotional appeals, a definition of "emotional" appeal can be generalized from the study as one that arouses emotions. This definition of the term "emotional" is clearly equivalent

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[1] I. L. Janis and S. Feshbach, "Effects of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLVIII (January, 1953), 78-92.

[2] Ibid., p. 78.

[3] For example, see Leonard Berkowitz and Donald R. Cottingham, "The Interest Value and Relevance of Fear-Arousing Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LX (January, 1960), 37-43.

to that in the second definition--desire-arousing versus desire-satisfying--found from examination of the advertising literature.

Emotion-arousing versus emotion-reducing appeals--Evaluation.- Since the Janis and Feshbach study, various authors have endorsed and adopted the definition of emotional appeal as one that is drive-arousing. This simply means that the appeal is one that arouses sufficient discomfort in the subject that he is motivated to take action to relieve the discomfort. At the same time, the emotional appeal has been contrasted to a rational appeal which is defined as drive-reducing.

Two evaluative comments can now be made concerning the significance of this definition of emotional versus rational appeals. First, it will be recalled that brief reference was made in the advertising literature review to the proposed advertising appeal categories of positive versus negative appeals. Utilizing the definitions just developed, it appears that positive and negative appeals are subcategories of drive-arousing appeals. Negative appeals are those such as fear, as used by Janis and Feshbach, which stress the unpleasant situation that the audience member faces, while positive appeals arouse a desire for a positive situation. Almost all evidence in communication theory concerning positive and negative appeals has concerned the effects of negative appeals rather than positive. Yet

evidence indicates that positive appeals are far more often used than negative. Lucas and Britt tabulated positive versus negative appeals in advertisements appearing in the Saturday Evening Post and the Ladies Home Journal at five-year periods from 1920 to 1940.[1] They found from two to three per cent of the ads used negative appeals in 1920 compared to ten per cent in 1940. The rest used positive appeals. The authors conclude from this that negative appeals were growing in importance. However, Abelson later replicated the study using 1950 and 1955 issues of Life and the Saturday Evening Post.[2] He found that in 1950 only five of 174 ads used negative appeals and that in 1955, still only five out of 226 ads used negative appeals. This evidence seems to demonstrate that at least as far as advertisers are concerned, the issue of positive versus negative appeals is not a vital one.

A second comment is that there seems to be substantial support for the idea that rational and emotional appeals in the drive-arousing, drive-reducing sense are not really alternatives, but complements. Hovland, as early as 1954 noted, "These two types of appeals are not, of course, truly alternatives, since the effectiveness of emotional appeals may depend to a large extent on persuading individuals to

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[1] Lucas and Britt, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

[2] Herbert I. Abelson, Persuasion (New York: Springer Publishing, 1959), p. 18.

consider rationally certain issues raised, and of course rational arguments depend for their effectiveness on some appeal to the individual's motives."[1]

Bauer and Cox reach a similar conclusion and state that most situations call for both rational and emotional appeal components.[2] They develop a hypothesis concerning the appropriate mix or levels of emotional and rational appeal components. However, Bauer and Cox's contention that drive-arousing appeals and drive-reducing appeals encompass what are generally referred to as emotional and rational appeals seems to ignore evidence hopefully developed here concerning other perhaps more significant appeal categories also commonly termed emotional and rational.

It should also be added that the idea of combining drive-arousing appeals with drive-reducing appeals is, with a slight change in terminology, an accepted and widely used advertising technique. Establishing a problem and then offering the product as a solution to the problem is a format widely believed to be effective, especially in television advertising. Ogilvy quotes Dr. Gallup as reporting that commercials which start by setting up a problem,

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[1] Carl I. Hovland, "Effects of the Mass Media of Communication" in Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. by Gardner W. Lindzey (Cambridge, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1954), p. 1076.

[2] Raymond A. Bauer, with Donald F. Cox, "Rational versus Emotional Communications: A New Approach," in Cox, editor, op. cit., pp. 475-476.

offer the product as a solution and then demonstrate the product sells four times as many people as commercials that merely present product claims.[1]

Instrumental versus psychosocial benefits as behavior determinants

The evidence and the discussion of emotional and rational appeals in communication theory concerns drive-arousing versus drive-reducing appeals. However, this definition of emotional versus rational is only one of three possible categorizations discovered in the advertising literature. Further, interest in the drive-arousing, drive-reducing category is diminished somewhat by the possibility that these appeals are not competitive, but should generally be used complementarily.

Mass communication theory does not directly present either evidence or speculation concerning the second suggested emotional/rational category--product benefits versus psychosocial benefits. However, looking further into theories of attitude formation and behavior determination reveals a number of supportive formulations. These formulations do not deal directly with communications appeals; rather, their relevance depends upon the assumption found to be prevalent in the advertising literature--that appeal categories are parallel or complementary to behavior categories. Reviewing

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[1] Ogilvy, op. cit., p. 132.

these theories will somewhat anticipate material to be presented in Chapter III, but the duplication seems unavoidable.

Sarnoff and Katz.- One of the most helpful formulations supporting the idea that people have both instrumental needs and psychosocial needs is Sarnoff and Katz's suggested integration of three different approaches to the motivation process.[1] It was developed earlier, during the discussion of the motivation research period and its aftermath, that the motivation research controversy stimulated the introduction of several different schools of thought concerning the motivational process. Motivation research, it was noted, was based on clinical psychology and the belief that the individual behaves so as to maintain and enhance his self-image. We also noted that the rationalist opponents of motivation research found support for their views in Gestalt or field theory. The Gestaltists hold that the individual tries to organize, order, and make sense of the world around him. Under Gestalt theory, "the rational man, once rejected by psychologists, is now resurrected."[2] A third strand of thinking introduced to advertising during this period was that much of individual behavior and attitude adoption is

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[1] I. Sarnoff and D. Katz, "The Motivational Bases of Attitude Change," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XLIX (January, 1954), 115-124.

[2] Ibid., p. 115.

shaped by the desire to abide by group norms so as to gain acceptance by the group. This model, stimulated by the study of small groups, is the basis of the learning theorist's approach. In learning theory, behavior and attitude formation is adaptive, based on rewards given for conformity and punishment assigned for deviation.

Sarnoff and Katz maintain that these three motivational bases of attitude formation are not competitive, but rather that all three operate within various persons and that sometimes they operate simultaneously within the same person. They state that there are three motivational contexts--equivalent to the three motivational theories--in which attitudes are formed. They are: (1) reality testing--people have a curiosity, a need to know about the external world and thus they accept information about the world, leading toward formation of attitudes; (2) reward and punishment--attitudes are adopted as a result of external rewards or punishments such as desire for group acceptance or fear of social ostracism; (3) ego defense--individuals have physiological and social needs which they attempt to satisfy. Some of these needs are seen as socially undesirable impulses which may be suppressed by the individual or may be gratified by the adoption of protective attitudes called ego-defenses.

This theory by Sarnoff and Katz not only neatly integrates much of the diverse thinking that advertisers

have tried to apply to consumer motivation, it also provides theoretical support for the categorization of advertising appeals as product performance information (complementing the reality testing need) versus psychosocial benefits (complementing the need for rewards and for defense of the ego).

This hypothetical formulation by Sarnoff and Katz was tested by Katz, Sarnoff, and McClintock in 1956.[1] The experiment, which will be considered later, supported the hypothesis. It should be noted that Sarnoff and Katz's formulation concerns attitude formation rather than behavior. The authors are less certain of its applicability to behavior prediction since behavior results not only from attitudes, but also from many other factors.

Deutsch and Gerard.- A formulation by Deutsch and Gerard in 1955 supports the idea that individuals have both social and informational needs.[2] The authors are critical of earlier studies of group influence because they assume that the pressure to conform is the only influence exerted by the group. But, state the authors, there are really two types of group influence--normative and informational.

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[1] D. Katz, I. Sarnoff, and C. McClintock, "Ego Defense and Attitude Change," Human Relations, IX, No. 1 (1956), 27-45.

[2] Morton Deutsch and Harold B. Gerard, "A Study of Normative and Informational Social Influences Upon Individual Judgement," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LI (November, 1955), 629-636.

Normative social influence is an influence to conform to the expectations of others. Informational social influence is influence to accept information from others as evidence about the reality of the external world.

The ability of the group to exert influence in these two areas (or the willingness of individuals to accept these two types of influence) indicates that the individual has need for both factual information and for information on how he should behave. These two information needs parallel the reality testing and reward/punishment motivational bases of Sarnoff and Katz. While this concept concerns the influence of groups, it seems not too big a jump to hypothesize that communications from other sources, such as advertisements, likewise could supply either factual or behavioral information and could be categorized in those terms. Deutsch and Gerard's hypothesis has been tested experimentally and has found confirmation.

Bauer and Associates.- Perhaps the most forceful expositor of the concept of instrumental versus psychosocial needs is Raymond Bauer. First stated in 1964 in "The Obstinate Audience," Bauer was critical of the traditional view that the audience of a communication was concerned only with psychosocial problems.[1] He suggested:

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[1]Bauer, "Obstinate Audience," op. cit., pp. 319-328.

> Much is gained by looking upon the behavior of the audience as full-blown problem solving. Such a viewpoint requires the assumption that people have more problems to solve than simply relating to other people and reducing their psychic tensions, among them being allocation and conservation of resources.[1]

Bauer believes that this concept brings together the mass communications model in which individuals are seen as solving ego-defense and interpersonal problems and the model of economic rationality in which individuals are assumed to maximize tangible values.

If valid, the idea that economic rationality and psychological motivation can both exist and in the same person in effect offers a reconciliation of the motivation research versus rationalist controversy. It also indicates that the earliest marketing models of consumer behavior, which were drawn from classical economic concepts of rationality, were not wrong, but, rather, were incomplete. Bauer's concept that consumer behavior might be either rational in the economic sense or seeking psychosocial benefits also lends support to a parallel categorization of advertising appeals--those offering "rational" information about product performance, price, and value and those offering "emotional" information about the social and psychological benefits that purchase of the product might bring.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324.

The concept that consumer behavior contains both rational problem solving and psychosocial components is one of the basic assumptions in a consumer behavior and communications model that has been used in a series of experiments by Bauer and his associates.[1] These experiments represent one of the most substantial applications to date of mass communication and other social psychological theories yet made to the field of advertising. Frequent reference to these studies will be made in later chapters.

In one application of the model, Bauer discusses two bits of evidence supporting the dual rational-emotional nature of consumer behavior.[2] He quotes Back and Gergen as noting that a common observation in conducting field interviews is that respondents sometimes answer so as to provide information; at other times they attempt to answer so as to ingratiate themselves to the interviewer.[3] This, says Bauer, is a manifestation of informational (rational) versus psychosocial behavior.

Bauer found further support for his concept in his study of the drug-prescribing behavior of physicians.[4] He

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[1]Many of the works are included in Cox, ed. op. cit.

[2]Raymond A. Bauer, "Source Effect and Persuasibility: A New Look," in Cox, ed., op. cit., pp. 559-578.

[3]K. W. Back and K. J. Gergen, "Idea Orientation and Ingratiation in the Interview: A Dynamic Model of Response Bias," Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section, American Statistical Association (1963), pp. 284-288.

[4]Raymond A. Bauer and Lawrence H. Wortzel, "Doctor's Choice: The Physician and His Sources of Information About Drugs,"in Cox, ed., op. cit., pp. 152-171.

found that when prescribing a less risky drug, physicians satisfied their psychosocial needs by following the recommendation of the detail (sales) man. (This makes the reasonable assumption that selecting the brand recommended by the detail man enhances a gratifying social relationship between doctor and detail man.) However, when the drug was perceived as risky, the doctor was more likely to behave with traditional rationality and be influenced in selection by the reputation of the drug manufacturer. In other words, under one set of conditions physicians exhibited rational problem solving behavior and under different conditions they satisfied psychosocial needs.

<u>Deliberate versus impulsive buying behavior</u>

Thus far the review of the behavioral sciences has provided support and further definition of two of the three meanings for emotional versus rational appeals that were suggested by the advertising literature. The third meaning of emotional versus rational appeals (actually it was the earliest suggested - by Scott in 1917) is suggestive versus reason-why. Suggestive copy, according to this concept, is used to induce impulse buying whereas reason-why copy is used to induce deliberation. The behavioral issue to be examined, then, is the nature of purchase deliberation and the role of communication in affecting deliberation.

<u>Influence of behaviorism</u>.- The idea of impulse buying and the ability of advertising to induce it appears to

stem from the stimulus-response model of behavioristic psychology that, as noted, was popular with early marketers. In the stimulus-response model, behavior is seen as a direct response to some external variable or, in more advanced formulations, as an interaction between an external variable (e.g., an advertisement for a soft drink) and a physiological internal variable (e.g., thirst).[1] The great omission in such a model is the psychological and social variables that in modern formulations are believed to intervene and modify the effect of the external variable. Thus marketers today have moved away from the stimulus-response model in recognition of the fact that the effect produced by an external stimulus is not simple or direct, but varies from person to person and from situation to situation.

Fearing notes that there has also been a notion of the communication process that resembles the stimulus-response behavior model.[2] But this communication model is likewise inadequate because behavioral responses are not automatic or mechanical, but depend upon "the totality of cultural and personality factors which each respondent brings to the situation."[3]

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[1]The stimulus-response model is reviewed in Nicosia, op. cit., pp. 113-115.

[2]Franklin Fearing, "Human Communication," in People, Society, and Mass Communication, ed. by Lewis Anthony Dexter and David Manning White (London: Collier-Macmillan, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 39-67.

[3]Ibid., p. 41.

Evidence concerning deliberation.- Despite the inadequacy of the stimulus-response concept of behavior and the inadequacy of a similarly based communication model, the notion of deliberation seems a pertinent dimension to be considered in defining rationality. Nicosia, in reviewing marketing concepts of rationality, finds that deliberation, defined in terms of the extent of search, is still a current definition of rationality suggested by the marketing literature.[1]

The extent and occurrence of prepurchase deliberation has been studied empirically, primarily in connection with the economic theory of demand. According to Katona, the most common alternative to deliberation or problem solving purchase behavior is not impulsive behavior, but habitual behavior.[2] Psychology, says Katona, recognizes a distinction between habitual action which depends upon frequency and recency of repetition and problem solving behavior which is characterized by arousal of a problem, weighing of alternatives (deliberation), and selection. The most thorough-going study of this concept was conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan

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[1]Nicosia, op. cit., p. 34 and footnote 8, p. 34.

[2]George Katona, "Rational Behavior and Economic Behavior," Psychological Review, LX (September, 1953), 309-310.

and is interpreted by George Katona and Eva Mueller.[1] The study found that the amount of deliberation varied widely from purchase to purchase and from person to person. There was some confirmation in the study that greater deliberation occurred when the purchase was important, or when it occurred under new circumstances; habitual action was more likely if past experience with the product were satisfactory. Deliberation also varied directly with education and income and inversely with age and the urgency of need. In sum, what this study indicates is that the degree of deliberation involved in a purchase is a highly complex variable dependent upon a great many factors. To suppose that a suggestive ad is a dominant determinant of deliberation seems to greatly oversimplify the process and exaggerate the power of advertising. *

Evidence concerning impulse.- Bauer, considering the Katona-Mueller and similar studies, suggests that pre-purchase deliberation depends upon the risk that the consumer perceives in the purchase situation.[2] This explains, says Bauer, why some studies have shown that middle class consumers are more deliberate than lower class consumers.

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[1]George Katona and Eva Mueller, "A Study of Purchase Decisions," in Consumer Behavior, ed. by Lincoln H. Clark (New York: New York University Press, 1954), pp. 30-81.

[2]Raymond A. Bauer, "Consumer Behavior as Risk Taking," in Cox, ed., op. cit., pp. 23-33.

The middle class consumer has more at risk in career, reputation, and accumulated property. The lower class consumer with less at risk and perhaps less able to calculate the consequences of his act is more apt to impulsively "take the plunge" and do what seems immediately desirable.

Another possible interpretation of impulsive buying behavior is that it is not impulsive at all. Rather it represents a purchase intention that was duly deliberated, but postponed due to lack of an enabling mechanism such as finances or availability of product.

In connection with this, the phenomenon of the "sale" ad or sales promotion ad should be noted. It seems quite possible to categorize ads into short term versus long term intended effects. "Sale" ads and sales promotion ads are designed to elicit an immediate behavioral response whereas other ads seem more intent on building favorable attitudes toward a brand in hopes of long term favorable buyer consideration. But this is quite a different case than the one raised by Scott. Promotional or "sale" ads do not generally attempt to appeal to basic instincts or impulses. To the contrary, they are usually concerned with such issues as price reductions, special values, or the chance to win a prize. The call to immediate action is not via impulse, but through presentation of a mechanism (a special low price) that will permit satisfaction of a desire that may have been long deliberated.

TRUE

The case of subliminal advertising, which was a center of controversy in the late 1950's, bears upon the question of impulse stimulation. Proponents of this method claimed that suggestive communications exposed at a level below conscious perception (e.g., flashed on a movie screen for extremely short periods) would induce impulsive behavior in the suggested direction. Psychologists have long recognized that under laboratory conditions an individual may perceive a subliminal stimulus. James Vicary, a marketing researcher, conducted an experimental commercial application of this concept to see if subliminal advertising could induce purchase behavior.[1] His widely reported test seemed to produce positive results and a consequent wave of protest and concern. However, the results were apparently due to faulty technique. Subsequent tests failed to disclose any subliminal effects. Berelson and Steiner conclude, "There is no scientific evidence that subliminal stimulation can initiate subsequent action, to say nothing of commercially or politically significant action."[2]

The reasons for the ineffectiveness of subliminal advertising may be many, but included should be the

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[1] J. Brooks, "The Little Ad that Isn't There," Consumer Reports (January, 1958), pp. 5-11.

[2] Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior, An Inventory of Scientifc Findings (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1964), p. 95.

realization that there is today general agreement that any communication, subliminal or not, does not directly produce effects in the subject, but, rather, is mediated by a host of intervening variables, making the effect different from person to person and from situation to situation. Thus subliminal messages, if perceived, must pass the same screening process as any other communication. good point

In summary, there is some scattered evidence and some unverified hypotheses concerning deliberate versus impulsive action. However, neither the nature nor the extent of impulsiveness in consumer behavior is clear. More important to the question of suggestive versus reason-why appeals is the lack of substantiation for the idea that impulsive behavior can be directly induced by an external stimulus such as a "suggestive" advertisement.

Rational Versus Emotional Appeal-- A Redefinition

The meanings of rational versus emotional appeals

There have hopefully been enough summaries during this review so that the derived meanings of emotional versus rational appeals can now be stated without elaboration. Three major meanings have been discussed:

	emotional		rational
1.	suggestive	vs.	reason-why
	(impulse-inducing	vs.	deliberation-inducing)
2.	psychosocial benefits	vs.	product-performance information
3.	desire-arousing	vs.	desire-satisfying

The review of the advertising literature indicated that these three meanings of emotional versus rational appeals began to emerge from the earliest literature in the 1920's and were clarified and carried forward in subsequent writings. The second definition became a point of focus during the motivation research controversy in the 1950's, resulting in a clarification and extension of the categorization. Since the 1950's, the question of product facts versus psychosocial benefits has not diminished in importance, but the more balanced view that both styles of behavior may at times occur seems to be more generally accepted.

The review of behavioral science findings provided material relevant to each of the three concepts of emotional versus rational defined in the advertising literature. It was found that mass communication theory considered the issue in terms of desire-arousing versus desire-satisfying appeals and that this definition has received considerable research investigation. The second definition found substantial support in various formulations that indicated that individuals have both a need for information about physical realities and for information about acceptable and satisfying behavior. The third definition--suggestive versus reason-why--finds less support from available research evidence. It was suggested that this definition was founded on a behavioristic notion of behavior and communication that is now viewed as less adequate. While the amount of

deliberation involved in a purchase appears to be an important variable in purchase behavior, it could not be demonstrated that it was a variable affected by advertising or even, for sure, that it provided a measure of rationality.

Rational versus emotional defined

As a result of tracing the issue of rational versus emotional appeals through the advertising literature and from the review of behavioral science findings, the definition of "emotional" and "rational" to be used in this analysis can now be stated. Emotional advertisements are those which stress the psychological or social benefits which will accrue to the purchaser. Rational appeals are ones which stress product performance--the instrumental benefits of the physical product. The problem, then, is to determine conditions under which product-performance appeals would be more effective and conditions under which psychological or social appeals will be more effective. Excellent

Of the three interpretations of emotional versus rational defined, the one selected seems the most important and most topical. Product facts versus psychosocial benefits appear to be real alternatives. It is true that any advertisement may contain elements of both, but most advertisers support the idea that an ad must have a single focus--must try to accomplish a single task. This usually means that a decision must be made to concentrate on presenting information about the product itself or on presenting information about the psychological or social benefits of the

purchase such as the prestige or social acceptance that may accrue to the purchaser. The definition selected is consistent with one of the main streams of thought in the advertising literature. It is also consistent with and considerably amplified by existing behavioral science knowledge.

The other two definitions, by contrast, appear to have less "issue value" for advertisers. The question of desire-arousing and desire-satisfying appeals appears more and more to be a question not of alternatives, but of finding the right proportion of the two. The question of suggestive versus deliberation-inducing appeals is a questionable advertising issue. While the degree of deliberation appears to be an important variable in consumer behavior, it is not clear that it is a variable that is influenced by type of copy appeal.

Hypothesis statement— information usefulness

In order to answer the question posed in this problem a hypothesis has been developed that suggests important conditions that determine the relative effectiveness of product performance versus psychosocial benefit appeals. The hypothesis to be developed in the next section can be stated in advance as follows:

> The relative effectiveness of a product performance versus psychosocial benefit advertising appeal

> depends upon the perceived usefulness and relevance of the information to the audience in a given situation; product performance appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is utilitarian, psychosocial appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is ego-defense or social approval.

The hypothesis does not suppose that perceived usefulness is the only variable, but that it is an important one. For example, it seems likely that the most effective appeal may also vary with the product's ability to perform, the believability of the claim, and the relevance of the appeal to the medium in which it appears.

Implication of the hypothesis

It was noted in the opening of this chapter that the hypothesis to be presented was complementary to the marketing concept. Consequently, the hypothesis, if verified, has implications which parallel those of the marketing concept. Just as the marketing concept states that the successful product must be designed to meet consumers' needs, the information usefulness hypothesis proposes that in making a purchase decision, consumers also have information needs. The implication for marketers is that they should in selecting advertising appeals attempt to satisfy the information needs of consumers. The advertiser should attempt to look

through the buyers' eyes and ask himself, "What information would the buyer find useful in making this purchase decision?"

The next step-- developing the hypothesis

The proposed hypothesis was developed deductively after consideration of available behavioral science knowledge. The reasoning which led to the hypothesis will be presented in the next chapter through the exposition of a number of propositions. Each of these propositions will be supported by existing theory and study evidence. The propositions in summary form are:

1. Consumer behavior is designed to achieve goals and solve problems;
2. These goals may be "real," may be social, or may be ego-defensive;
3. External stimuli (advertisements) do not directly influence behavior, but, rather, are screened by various intervening variables;
4. Consumers admit (and actively seek) information that they perceive as useful and relevant to the problem that they are trying to overcome or to the goal that they are trying to achieve.

It is held that the hypothesis follows from these propositions--if they are true, then product performance appeals will be more effective when the consumer's need is

utilitarian, and psychosocial benefit appeals will be more effective when the consumer's need is ego-defense or social approval.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INFORMATION USEFULNESS HYPOTHESIS

The Need for a Conceptual Scheme

If there is one single idea that is more important than any other to the question of emotional versus rational appeals, it is that the effect of an advertising communication varies from person to person and within the same person depending upon the situation. The idea seems simple and obvious when stated that flatly, yet it took many years of research before its truth and importance was realized.

The variable nature of communication effects

Neither early communications research nor much advertising teaching recognized the variability of effects. In the study of emotional versus rational appeals, for example, pioneering communications studies such as Hartmann's (1936-1937) described earlier were seeking to determine which type of appeal was *generally* superior.[1] Some early advertising writers likewise examined the issue of emotional versus rational appeals with a view to finding

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[1]Hartmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-114.

which was generally better. Scott, for example, writing in 1917, favored the emotional approach for most cases,[1] and Hattwick, as late as 1950, pleaded the case for the general superiority of emotional appeals.[2] One major aspect of the motivation research controversy that was reviewed earlier concerned the question of which was the superior approach--rational appeals or emotional.

Research on general effects of stimuli has tended to have contradictory results. Hartmann, for example, found that an emotional appeal was more effective than a rational appeal, but later studies contradicted this. The fact that the desirability of an emotional appeal or a rational appeal depended upon the specific personal or environmental situation was not immediately apparent to the researchers. The same lack of appreciation of the variability of effects occurred in tests of other communication variables. Bauer, considering group experiments conducted by the Hovland and Lewin groups, noted, "Nobody stopped to record very explicitly the main finding of all the experiments; that communication, given a reasonably large audience, varies in its impact."[3]

It gradually came to be realized that variability of communication effects was the general case rather than

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[1]Scott, op. cit., p. 83.

[2]Hattwick, op. cit.

[3]Bauer, "Obstinate Audience," op. cit., p. 320.

an aberration. The Bauers, reviewing evidence of the impact of mass media, state:

> . . . our existing findings indicate that every communication must be assumed to have a differential effect. . . . We no longer ask "What type of message is most effective?" but "What type of message is most effective with what sorts of people under what circumstances?"[1]

Good

This differential effect occurs because the same stimulus has a different meaning and value for each person depending upon the needs and predispositions that the person brings to the situation. And so the idea has developed that communications do not directly produce effects on the audience, but rather that each member of the audience selects and shapes messages to meet his own needs. These factors that select and shape messages are commonly called intervening variables.

The purpose of this preamble is merely to emphasize a basic assumption upon which the analysis which follows is based. Neither emotional nor rational appeals are generally superior. The most effective choice of appeals varies with each situation and also depends in large measure upon factors that the individual brings to the communication situation. An objective of this analysis is to define some of these consumer factors or intervening variables that determine the most effective use of emotional or rational appeals,

[1]Raymond A. Bauer and Alice H. Bauer, "America, Mass Society and Mass Media," Journal of Social Issues, XVI, No. 3 (1960), 25.

but not to determine which is generally superior or inferior.

The phenomenon of variable communications effects has important marketing implications. It is inevitable, since markets themselves are not homogeneous, that any given appeal will not be effective with the total market but only with a segment of it. This is a familiar phenomenon to marketers who recognize that most markets are made up of segments each demanding a somewhat different product. Rather than design a product that attempts to meet the needs of the total market, marketers today increasingly focus on a product designed to meet the specific needs of a significant segment of the market. Yankelovich suggests, however, that segmentation must go beyond traditional demographics to include differences in buyer attitudes, motivations, values, etc.[1] The categorization used in this analysis of utilitarian product needs versus psychosocial needs is one possible basis for segmenting a market that goes beyond descriptive demographics and deals with consumer needs. Further, emotional and rational appeals, defined in parallel terms, hopefully provide a means for reaching and communicating with these segments. Thus the variability of communications effects is a tool that can be used by advertisers.

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[1]Daniel Yankelovich, "New Criteria for Market Segmentation," in Readings in Marketing, ed. by Philip R. Cateora and Lee Richardson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 286-287.

Evidence for the conceptual scheme

The purpose of this analysis at one level of thinking is to answer a rather straightforward, practical, business question. The question cannot be answered, however, without development of a conceptual scheme. Some assumptions must be developed concerning the role of information in the consumer decision-making process.

These assumptions are presented in this chapter in the form of propositions. The propositions are interrelated; taken together they form the conceptual scheme or a model of the role of communication in consumer purchase behavior.

The assumptions are more than simple affirmations. They are based on evidence and formulations found in various behavioral fields of study. Each of the propositions will be supported by exposition of these findings. Thus this section will also provide information concerning the second level problem to which this analysis is directed by testing the usefulness of behavioral science knowledge in building a conceptual scheme for answering a business question.

None of the elements of the conceptual scheme is original nor was this an objective. The aim here is to determine whether or not a business question can be answered through use of available behavioral knowledge. If there is originality in this analysis, it lies in the recombination

of known elements rather than in the discovery of new elements.

Consumer Behavior as Goal-Directed, Problem-Solving Activity

The first proposition

The initial assumption in the conceptual scheme deals with the purpose of consumer purchase behavior. It holds that consumer behavior is not passive or capricious, but that consumers engage in purposive activity. The first proposition can be stated in these terms:

> Proposition 1: In considering products and making purchase decisions, consumers engage in purposeful activity designed to achieve goals and solve problems.

The implication of this proposition for advertising communication may not be immediately apparent. What it proposes is that the consumer does not enter into a communication situation passively. It has long been taken for granted that the advertiser communicates with the consumer with a purpose--to expound the merits of his product with a view to a sale. But what of the consumer; does he not also have a purpose? This assumption states that he does have a purpose--to achieve a goal or overcome a problem. We assume, then, that both parties in an advertising communication situation are active participants, each with a purpose, each looking for something from the other party.

This point of view was expounded by Davison in an article outlining a theory of communications effects that greatly influences this analysis. Davison first assumes, similar to the above, that ". . . all human actions and reactions, including changes in attitude and knowledge, are in some way directed toward satisfaction of wants or needs."[1] He then concludes from his model of communications effects that

> the communicator's audience is not a passive recipient--it cannot be regarded as a passive lump of clay to be molded by the master propagandist. Rather, the audience is made up of individuals who demand something from the communications to which they are exposed.[2]

Davison's concept of the communication process was seized upon and elaborated by Bauer who incorporated it in his risk-taking model of consumer behavior. Bauer terms Davison's model the "transactional model" in which the communication and the audience exchange, each giving the other something of value. He contrasts this with the "social model," heretofore the popular assumption, in which the communicator does something to the audience and the audience reacts.[3] This latter model is the one commonly used in

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[1]W. Phillips Davison, "On the Effects of Communication," in People, Society, and Mass Communication, ed. by Lewis Anthony Dexter and David Manning White (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, Collier-Macmillan, 1964), p. 72.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 89.

[3]Bauer, "Obstinate Audience," *op. cit.*, p. 319.

communications studies. Its inadequacy, says Bauer, has often been apparent when the effects on the audience of a communication turn out to be other than the intended one. The reason for the contrary results can usually be found by looking through the audience's eyes to see the goal they were trying to achieve and how the communication affected this purpose.[1]

Thus what both Davison and Bauer are saying, is that to understand how a communication will affect an audience, it is necessary to recognize that the consumer too has objectives and that these affect the way in which a communication works.

Alderson presents a similar idea in terms of marketing theory.[2] He states that a heterogeneous market (one in which both products supplied and products demanded are differentiated) is cleared by information and that the clearing process requires initiative by both buyers and sellers. The buyer must specify her need or her product requirement. The seller must identify his product. It is this interchange of information that results in a product sale. This idea, like Davison's, consists of a transactional process in which both buyer and seller take an active part.

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[1] Ibid., p. 321.

[2] Alderson, Dynamic Marketing, op. cit., pp. 52-60.

Evidence supporting the first proposition

The first proposition is by its nature one that would be difficult to "prove." That is, the assumption states, let us look at consumer behavior as though it were goal-directed and problem- solving and see if this frame of reference helps us to understand what is happening. It is not assumed that consumers themselves define their behavior or motivation in these terms. Rather, it is suggested that if we view consumer behavior in these terms, it will help us to explain and predict the reaction of consumers to persuasive communications.

Rather than attempt to prove the first proposition, evidence will be presented that indicates that the assumption is reasonable (i.e., does not grossly conflict with reality) and that it has proved a useful way of looking at behavior in other fields of study.

Goal-directed activity in psychology.- It is a very generally accepted belief in psychology, of various schools, that human activity is directed by the desire to achieve goals. The assumption of this analysis added the idea that behavior is "problem-solving" as well as goal-directed. The two thoughts, however, should not be separated. The meaning intended for "problem-solving" refers to the many intermediate problems encountered in the course of pursuing a goal.

In the review of the motivation research controversy in the preceding chapter, it was noted that the antagonists each drew upon a school of psychological thought--the motivation researchers on clinical psychology and the "rationalists" on Gestalt theory. Some of the differences between the two schools were noted at the time, but the two agree on the belief that human behavior is goal-directed. The two schools do differ, however, in that in clinical psychology the goals appear as largely unconscious while in Gestalt theory they are largely conscious. For purposes of this analysis, the distinction between conscious and unconscious goals is unimportant as long as behavior is consistent and consumers are able to perceive what elements are barriers and which are aids in achieving the goals.

Another school of psychology, developed from Gestalt, is the phenomenological approach such as presented by Carl Rogers. Rogers' theoretical propositions, based on clinical experience and research, present a theory of individual behavior that has been widely used by marketers.[1] Rogers, too, proposes viewing human activity as designed to achieve goals. "Behavior is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its need as experienced, in the field as perceived."[2]

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[1]Carl R. Rogers, Client Centered Therapy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951).

[2]Ibid., p. 491.

<u>Goal-directed activity in cognitive theory</u>.- The goal-directed base of human behavior is also a basic premise of cognitive theory, a fast developing field of social psychology that has great relevance to marketing and advertising.

Cognitive theory is concerned with the way that people deal with information about their environment and about themselves and how they utilize this information to guide their behavior. Fearing,[1] applying cognitive thinking to the communications situation, sees the process in these terms: human beings are always striving for goals, but the path to these goals is filled with obstacles. To understand and overcome these obstacles, the individual must cognitively structure the situation. That is, he must identify the problem, gain perspective on it, and identify the forces involved. This total process is called cognitive structuring, and it is in this sense that the first proposition sees consumers as problem solving in an attempt to achieve goals. The theory, in short, views human activity as motivated to achieve goals and overcome the obstacles in the path to goals. The behavior or type of activity chosen to reach these goals is guided by a person's particular cognitive structure--by his perception of the world,

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[1] Fearing, <u>op. cit</u>., pp. 43-44.

his view of the facts, his belief of what action leads to what result.

Although it is a subject to be considered later, it might be noted here that there has emerged from these general cognitive concepts a number of theories of cognitive consistency. These theories have in common the belief that individuals strive to maintain consistency in the various elements in their cognitive structure.

Cognitive theory, then, is another area of behavioral study in which the goal-directed nature of human behavior is a basic and helpful assumption.

<u>Goal-directed activity in economics</u>.- The assumption that human behavior is directed toward achievement of goals is also basic to the consumer demand theory of economics. Consumers are assumed to be endowed by nature and by their culture with needs and desires that far surpass the purchasing ability of their incomes. In this circumstance, the consumer's goal is to maximize--to utilize his income in such a way as to obtain the greatest total anticipated satisfaction that his money will allow. Demand theory goes on to describe how the consumer can realize this maximization.

Economic theory, then, assumes as was done in this analysis that consumers enter the market actively. They are not passive participants waiting for suppliers to

influence them; rather, they enter the market seeking goal satisfaction. Economic theory goes further than does this first proposition by specifying what the goal is that motivates consumers--the desire to maximize. It should be noted that this explanation, like this analysis, assumes that the goods themselves are not the goal, but, rather, the means to the goal.[1] The nature of consumer goals assumed in this analysis will be outlined in a later section.

Goal-directed activity in communication theory.- It was noted earlier that Bauer, elaborating on Davison's formulation, was highly critical of the traditional social model of communications effects because it does not take into account the goals and objectives of the audience. Most of the past communications studies, says Bauer, have been concerned with the effects intended by the communicator rather than with what the audience was trying to accomplish.[2] Such a model gives a highly one-sided view of the communications process and makes it difficult, by not considering the audience's goals, to understand why the effects intended by the communicator are sometimes not realized. It is to

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[1] In this connection, see Nicosia, op. cit., p. 84, where he discusses this topic in relation to consumer behavior. Also see p. 60, where the concept seems to fit his analysis of the economic model.

[2] Raymond A. Bauer, "The Initiative of the Audience," Journal of Advertising Research, III (June, 1963), 3.

avoid this one-sidedness that this conceptual scheme specifically recognizes the audience as an active participant in the communications process.

Bauer notes two types of communications studies in which the audience's role as a participant has been considered--an assumption that has enriched the studies.[1] One of these is in the homeostatic or cognitive consistency studies mentioned earlier in which the audience is seen as taking the initiative to seek out and use media to reduce cognitive inconsistency. A second type of communication study recognizing the active role of the audience is the so-called functional study. A number of these studies have been conducted to investigate how people use particular media--the role that they play in the audience's life. Studies have been conducted of the daytime radio serial, the daily newspaper, and *Mad* magazine.[2] In each of these studies, the question asked was not what effect or use was intended by the communicator, but what was the use and the meaning of the medium to the audience. In each case, it

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[1] *Ibid*.

[2] Herta Herzog, "What Do We Really Know About Daytime Serial Listeners?" in *Radio Research, 1942-1943*, ed. by P. F. Lazarsfeld and F. N. Stanton (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), pp. 3-33. Leo Bogart, "Adult Talk About Newspaper Comics," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI (July, 1955), pp. 26-30. Charles Winick, "Teenagers, Satire, and *Mad*," *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, VIII (1962), pp. 183-203.

was found that the medium had a rich range of meaning and usefulness different from and beyond that intended by the communicator.

Bauer also offers as examples his own studies in which the audience's goals were used in order to explain results.[1] In extensive post-war interview studies with Russian refugees, the refugees consistently mentioned word-of-mouth as the most important source of news, but rarely mentioned the frequent official meetings that were designed to provide information. The reason for this was realized only after the objectives of the audience (the refugees) were taken into account. The official meetings provided information that the officials wanted to communicate, but word-of-mouth provided the information that the refugees felt met their needs. Hence word-of-mouth was important while the official meetings, not useful, were seen as unimportant.

In his study of physicians' drug adoption practices, Bauer found that the medium of information that the doctor chose to rely upon depended upon the riskiness of the drug selection decision.[2] In other words, as the doctor's goal changed, his information need changed and he took the

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[1]Bauer, "The Initiative of the Audience," <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 4-6.

[2]Bauer and Wortzel in Cox, editor, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 152-171.

initiative in finding a new source of information. And finally, Bauer notes the study by himself and Cox in which consumers were asked to make simulated purchase selections among pairs of nylon stockings.[1] One purpose was to determine which consumers would accept the informational assistance of a simulated salesgirl. The answer was found through consideration of what it was the consumers were trying to accomplish. Those whose primary goal it was to get the "right answer" and who needed help in determining the right answer were apt to accept information. But those whose goal it was to cover-up their inadequacy, were less likely to accept information from another.

What these examples demonstrate is that communications research has been yet another area in which considering people to be actively goal-seeking and problem-solving has been a useful means to understanding of behavior.

Conclusion.- This section can best be concluded with the simple affirmation that the purposeful, goal-directed nature assumed for purchase behavior seems both a commonly used and a helpful concept. It is difficult to envision how such an assumption could be proved. However the assumption has been shown to be basic to many behavioral

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[1] Donald F. Cox and Raymond A. Bauer, "Self-Confidence and Persuasibility in Women," in Cox, editor, op. cit., pp. 394-410.

schools of thought that are directly relevant to advertising and to this study. Furthermore, it was shown that in a number of cases, recognition of the active role of the audience in the communications situation has produced new explanations for the effects of communications.

The Nature of Consumer Goals and Problems

The first assumption suggested that a helpful way of looking at consumer behavior is to consider that consumer behavior is an active, purposeful attempt to achieve goals and overcome the problems arising in the path to these goals. The natural next question to ask concerns the nature of these goals. What is the nature of the goals that consumers attempt to satisfy through the purchase of products? It can be readily stated that the products themselves are not the goals, but rather a means to a goal. It is also generally agreed that people aspire to multiple goals and feel multiple needs. The objective here is not to try to list the full range of human needs as some psychologists have tried and many advertising textbooks have copied. The attempt here is more limited--to suggest some broader categories or types of goals that are commonly pursued through purchasing products.

The second assumption is in familiar terms since it relates directly to the definition adopted earlier of rational and emotional appeals. It is as follows:

Proposition 2: <u>The goals that consumers attempt to achieve through purchase of products can be categorized as utilitarian, social or ego-defensive</u>.

The meaning of these three categories will be developed at length in this section, but preliminarily, they can they can be defined as follows: ego-defensive goals include those that serve to serve to sustain and enhance one's self-image; social goals are concerned with the desire for acceptance by other individuals and groups; and utilitarian goals include a host of practical desires to effectively cope with one's environment, such as efficient allocation of income, maintenance of health, or keeping the rain off one's head.

Considerable support for this proposition has been offered in connection with the definition of instrumental versus psychosocial advertising appeals. The approach in this section will be somewhat different and thus not wholly repetitious. First a series of related behavioral formulations will be reviewed. These formulations represent, in the main, developments of cognitive theory; they are concerned with the motivational bases of attitudes and behavior. Secondly, a series of studies will be reviewed in which categories of consumer goals similar to those assumed here are applied more specifically to consumer behavior situations.

The motivational bases of behavior in influence situations

Before exploring theories of the motivational bases of consumer behavior, it is necessary to briefly consider a side issue concerning the applicability of some of these studies. As will be seen, some of these formulations are concerned with the reasons behind behavior while others are concerned with the reasons behind attitudes. The issue of whether advertising seeks to change attitudes or change behavior and whether or not a change in attitude leads to a change in behavior is an issue that will be touched upon later. But for the immediate purpose the issue can be narrowed to the question of whether behavior and attitudes spring from the same motivational bases, i.e., from common goals and needs.

Attitudes and behavior.- First, the way in which certain terms will be used needs to be explained. There is general agreement that all human actions are directed toward the satisfaction of some need. The list of human needs may be very short or very long depending upon the school of thought. These needs result in the setting up of goals the achievement of which will satisfy the needs. These goals are said to be driving--that is, they are endowed by the needs with energy that results in behavior. Behavior, then, is human activity designed to achieve these goals.

The decision as to what behavior to adopt in order to achieve the desired goal is guided by attitudes. These attitudes represent stored up information gathered from all sorts of sources that tell the individual what kind of behavior will lead to what kind of outcome. Attitudes, then, are guides to behavior or predispositions to respond in a particular way towards objects or situations.

Cognitive theory, which was mentioned in an earlier section, is concerned with this entire attitudinal structure--a person's perception of the world, his view of the facts of the external world and his belief about what actions lead to what goals.[1] In cognitive theory, this total cognitive structure acts as a guide to behavior. Cognitive theory has been recently concerned with the tendency of people to maintain cognitive consistency. This includes maintenance of consistency between cognitive structure, behavior, and a person's goals.

Rosenberg, in developing the background for his homeostatic theory of attitude change, makes a parallel observation.[2] Attitudes, he says, cannot be observed

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[1]Dorwin Cartwright, "Some Principles of Mass Persuasion," in Dimensions of Social Psychology, ed. by W. Edgar Vinacke and others (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1964), pp. 301-303.

[2]Milton J. Rosenberg, and others, Attitude Organization and Change (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1960), pp. 3-4, 89.

directly, but are inferred from responses. Three responses that are used as measures of attitude are (1) affective responses--like or dislike for an object, (2) cognitive responses--what one believes or perceives about an object, and (3) behavioral responses--how an individual acts toward an object. A general and frequent finding, says Rosenberg, is that people tend to maintain consistency between these three components of attitude.

These theoretical formulations seem to be in agreement with what seems an intuitively reasonably proposition. Behavior is designed to achieve goals. Attitudes serve these same goals by directing behavior in ways that will promote goal achievement. There is a constant tendency, then, for consistency between goal, attitude (or cognitive structure) and behavior because each of them is striving to satisfy common needs. We will, therefore, assume that if we can learn what reasons are behind attitudes we have also learned something about the reasons underlying the behavior that goes with those attitudes. This assumption is important in the utilization of the studies which follow.

<u>Reasons underlying attitudes and behavior-- Katz and associates</u>.- The first theoretical approach to be examined is Daniel Katz's formulation of the formation and change of attitudes. This approach, developed in a series of articles written with associates, was partially explored in the preceeding chapter.

Katz defines attitude conventionally as a predisposition of an individual to evaluate some symbol, object, or aspect of his world in a favorable or unfavorable manner. He sees attitude as having both affective (like/dislike) and cognitive (belief) elements.[1]

In his original formulation with Sarnoff, Katz was attempting to integrate the views of three different approaches to the reasons behind attitude formation and change--Gestalt, learning theory and psychoanalysis.[2] Gestalt envisions man motivated by a need for a stable, inclusive, and clear perception of what the world is like. The learning theorist sees attitude formation as a response to the need for group acceptance, and the psychoanalytical clinician sees attitude formation as a response to the need to maintain self-image.

The authors see all three of these schools as describing motivational contexts in which attitudes are formed. Attitudes may be formed simply through the receipt of information in an area where the individual had no knowledge. This is termed "reality testing" and results from an

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[1]Daniel Katz, "The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV (Summer, 1960), 163-204.

[2]Sarnoff and Katz, op. cit., pp. 115-124.

individual's curiosity about the nature of the external world. Secondly, attitudes may be formed in order to gain social rewards such as group acceptance. This is termed reward and punishment motivation. Third, attitudes may be formed in order to protect the self-image, which case the authors term ego-defense.

The authors go on to propose and test the idea that any given attitude may be due to one of these three motivational bases and that similar attitudes among different people may be due to different motives.[1] In a hypothesis important to a later section, they propose that influence procedures designed to change attitudes must be aimed at the motivation behind the attitude.

This formulation by Sarnoff and Katz begins to give support and definition to the three goals--utilitarian, social, and ego-defensive--advanced in Proposition 2. Social goals aim at the rewards of group acceptance; ego-defensive goals aim at preservation of the self-image. However, it is less clear that the authors' reality testing motive or need to know about the external world is the same as the suggested utilitarian goal of maximizing one's external world.

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[1] Katz, Sarnoff, and McClintock, op. cit., pp. 27-45.

In 1960, Katz presented a somewhat revised formulation which he called a functional approach to the study of attitudes.[1] The function of attitudes, says Katz, is to meet psychological needs, four of which he identifies. Three of these functions of attitudes are similar to those of his earlier formulation. Attitudes are developed to protect one's self-image against feelings of inferiority. In this ego-defensive function, attitudes are attached to conventional objects without specific reference to the nature of the object itself, but, rather, in terms of how it relates to one's self-image. A second attitude function is termed value-expressive. These are attitudes that are developed to express to others the kind of person one is or wants to be, to confirm one's self-identity and to establish group-identity. This function is related to but not identical to the social goals of the earlier formulation. A third function of attitudes is the knowledge function in which attitudes are adopted to give meaning and a frame of reference to understand the external world. This is equivalent to the earlier reality-testing goal.

Most interesting, however, is a new, fourth function of attitudes which appears in this formulation. This is the adjustment or utilitarian function. Attitudes also develop because of the utility of an object for an individual. These attitudes are developed based on the satisfaction that an object has given in meeting a specific need. These

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[1]Katz, Sarnoff, and McClintock, op. cit., pp. 27-45.

attitudes serve to maximize the external world. Although this formulation is from a psychologist, the concept of the utilitarian function is strikingly economic. It provides support and a clear definition of the third goal advanced in Proposition 2.

Reasons underlying attitudes and behavior--Rokeach. Another formulation, a development of cognitive theory that closely supports the idea of Katz, is presented by Milton Rokeach in his theory of the open and closed mind.[1] Rokeach is concerned with the cognitive process--the structure and formation of beliefs. The belief system, says Rokeach, is made up of all the beliefs that a person has about the world he lives in; the disbelief system is composed of expectancies that one rejects as false. Rokeach describes the structure of belief systems which he pictures as being arranged in layers each containing certain categories of beliefs.[2]

More important to this analysis, however, is his discussion of open and closed belief systems which concerns the ability of the system to evaluate information. With an open belief system, a person can receive, evaluate, and act on relevant information from outside based on the

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[1]Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1960).

[2]Ibid., pp. 32-49.

information's own merit. The more open the system, the more the person is able to distinguish between the information that a communication gives about the world and the information it gives about the source of the message. By contrast, with a closed belief system a person cannot distinguish between information and the source of the information.[1]

As Katz did, Rokeach then relates three schools of psychology to the open and closed system. This discussion is highly relevant to this analysis because it not only supports the assumption about the goals of behavior but also is another example of integration of the schools of psychological thought that have been used by advertisers primarily to support antagonistic points of view. Rokeach says that the behaviorism model (similar to Katz's learning theory model) and the psychoanalysis models have closed belief systems. In the behaviorism model man evaluates information and behaves in response to the need for external reinforcements and rewards or what others call social needs. In the psychoanalysis model, behavior is a response to internal requirements to maintain self-image. The Gestalt model, by contrast, utilizes an open belief system since people behave in accordance with the meaningful, structural requirements of the situation.[2]

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[1]*Ibid.*, pp. 57-60. [2]*Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

Rokeach, like Katz, believes that all three of these models have validity and represent sets of conflicting motives that govern the acceptance of information and behavior. The belief system tends to be open or closed depending upon which motive predominates. When, for example, the cognitive need (the need to deal with the real world) predominates, the belief system will be open, information will be accepted, and action taken based on the objective requirements of the situation. This is the need situation described in Proposition 2 as utilitarian. On the other hand as the need to ward off a threat to one's self-image becomes stronger, the system closes. Information and source become inseparable. Information is evaluated and behavior determined by the need for rewards as meted out by authorities. This is analogous to the need described as ego-defensive.[1]

Rokeach's model of the open and closed belief system, like Katz's model, provides both support and further definition for the three goals or motivational bases of behavior as postulated in Proposition 2. Rokeach's model, of course, also does more than this since it describes some of the consequences of these motives in terms of the way people evaluate information and behave. These ideas will relate to later assumptions of this analysis.

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[1]Ibid., pp. 67-68.

Reasons underlying attitudes and behavior-- Kelman.- A third formulation supporting and amplifying the second proposition is Kelman's theoretical framework accounting for the formation and change in opinion.[1] (An opinion is generally considered a verbalized expression of an attitude.) In Kelman's formulation, an external social influence (such as a communication) can induce three different patterns of behavior or opinion. These three patterns are compliance, identification, and internalization.

Kelman's three behavior patterns can be viewed in terms of Proposition 2 as responses to influence as determined by the nature of the person's goals--social, ego-defensive, or utilitarian. Kelman explains that compliance occurs when an individual accepts influence because he hopes for a favorable reaction from another person or group.[2] The individual does not accept the induced behavior because of its content, but because it produces a satisfying social effect. Identification occurs when an individual adopts the behavior pattern of a person or a group because this behavior "is associated with a satisfying, self-defining relationship to the person or group, a role relationship that forms a part of the self-image." The

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[1]Herbert C. Kelman, "Processes of Opinion Change," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXV (Spring, 1961), 57-78.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 62-66.

individual defines his own role in terms of the role of another by actually being the other person. Internalization occurs when an individual accepts influence because it is consistent with his value system or with the problem that he is trying to solve. "The individual adopts it [the behavior] because he finds it useful for the solution of a problem, or because it is demanded by his own values--in short, because he finds it as inherently conducive to the maximization of his values."[1] Kelman adds that the most obvious example of internalization is acceptance of influence on rational grounds, such as the acceptance of expert opinion because it is relevant to solution of a problem.

Kelman's formulation, like the others examined here, goes on to examine conditions under which the three types of response patterns are likely to occur. But the relevance of Kelman's formulation to this section is that he sees that individual response to an influence or communication situation may seek to fulfill three different general goals--to comply or conform to the wishes of another person or group in order to reap the rewards of membership; to identify with another person so as to define or enhance one's self-image; and to internalize the influence because it is consistent with one's value system and helpful in solving problems or maximizing values.

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[1] Ibid., p. 65.

Three formulations have now been reviewed that consider the reasons underlying the formation of attitudes and the behavior that goes with those attitudes. All three of these theoretical structures have proposed that attitudes are formed and changed in a social influence process such as by a persuasive communication. All three of the authors believe that whether or not a communication will form or change an attitude and the nature of that new attitude will be determined in large part by the nature of the need that the attitude is to serve.

The categories of needs or goals seen by the three authors were similar and tended to support and amplify the goals of Proposition 2. Further, the authors demonstrated that these goals included and integrated the behavior patterns of three leading psychological models of man.

Reasons underlying attitudes and behavior--group influence studies.- Interesting indirect evidence supporting the proposed nature of consumer goals can be found in a series of studies of group influence. Since these studies were partially reviewed in Chapter I, they can be briefly summarized here. Deutsch and Gerard in a study of group influence were critical of earlier studies that assumed that group influence had only one dimension--the pressure to conform to the expectations of others.[1] Deutsch and

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[1] Deutsch and Gerard, op. cit., pp. 629-636.

Gerard held, and verified experimentally, that there are two dimensions to group influence--normative influence to conform to the wishes of others and informational influence to accept information from others as evidence about reality. Hochbaum, also considering this question, explains the informational influence as a means that a person has for checking opinions for which there is no objective referent.[1] In this case, the person establishes the reality of the opinion or validates it by checking it against the opinion of the group.

Hochbaum goes on to successfully test the hypothesis that because of the informational influence of groups, a person's dependence on social referents is inversely related to his confidence in his competence to judge the issue in question.[2] Similarly, Deutsch and Gerard demonstrated experimentally that social influence increases as the individual's uncertainty about the correctness of his judgment increases.[3] And later, London and Lim demonstrated experimentally that individual conformity to majority judgments increased directly with task difficulty.[4]

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[1]Godfrey M. Hochbaum, "The Relation Between Group Members' Self-Confidence and Their Reactions to Group Pressures to Uniformity," American Sociological Review, XIX (December, 1954), 678-687.

[2]Ibid., p. 679.

[3]Deutsch and Gerard, op. cit., pp. 629-630.

[4]Perry London and Howard Lim, "Yielding Reason to Social Pressure: Task Complexity and Expectation in Conformity," Journal of Personality, XXXII (March, 1964), 75-89.

Taken together, these three studies support the idea that individuals have the goal of social acceptance, and that in order to achieve this goal, they tend to conform to group norms. However, the studies also indicate, as Bauer has proposed, that individuals have, in addition, utilitarian goals that reflect a need to cope with the environmental world. The studies demonstrate that individuals use groups in order to achieve their utilitarian goals too, by using the group as a source of problem-solving information.

Consumer goals in consumer behavior studies

The studies just reviewed were concerned with behavior in influence situations, but the situations were not specifically concerned with consumer behavior. The situations, instead, were concerned with general social influence. There are also some studies of consumer behavior which use and provide support for the assumption of utilitarian, social and ego-defensive consumer goals.

It should be noted at the outset that the view that behavior can seek both psychosocial goals and utilitarian goals is not unique to the behavioral sciences, but is also found in advertising and marketing thinking. While some marketers have supported the idea that buying behavior is essentially rational and others, the idea that it is mainly emotional, some have tried to integrate the two ideas. For

example, Borden noted in 1942 the dual nature of consumer goals stating:

> Consumers are not guided solely by what may be termed rational motives; they do not think solely in terms of such practical things as durability, efficiency, dependability, and economy. . . . consumer buying is [also] likely to be influenced by desires to satisfy many personal whims and wishes which often have strong emotional character. 1

Even though many marketers argued along these lines, until recently there was little research based on this assumption. However, recently there has been such work some of which is reviewed below.

Consumer food requirements-- Beldo.- A study of milk consumption by Leslie A. Beldo is of interest because it represents an application of Yankelovich's concept of segmenting a market in more basic terms than demographics.[2] Beldo attempted to show that the market for milk could be segmented "functionally." He found that consumers seek to satisfy five requirements in purchasing milk. They are:

1. Nutritive/health requirements (such as sustenance, growth, physiological functioning)
2. Sensory requirements (such as aroma, taste, feel)

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[1]Borden, op. cit., pp. 658-659.

[2]Leslie A. Beldo, "Market Segmentation and Food Consumption," in On Knowing the Consumer, ed. by Joseph W. Newman (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 125-137.

3. Convenience requirements

4. Social/psychological requirements (such as status, life style, anxiety reduction)

5. Value

The requirements that consumers have in the purchase of milk, if considered a reflection of the goals that consumers strive toward, can be seen as roughly parallel to the utilitarian, social, and ego-defensive goal categories of Proposition 2. The nutritive, sensory, convenience, and value attributes of the product meet utilitarian needs of the consumer. Here the product is sought for what the product itself will do. But Beldo also found, even with a prosaic product such as milk, that consumers sought social and psychological goals from their purchase. They sought to define their status, sustain their life style, and reduce their anxiety through purchase of an appropriate brand of milk.

<u>Psychosocial versus problem-solving motives--Bauer.</u>- It was noted earlier, in Chapter II, that Raymond Bauer has been a pioneer and leading exponent of an integrated view of consumer behavior as seeking both psychosocial goals and solutions to utilitarian problems. The evidence that he noted was reviewed in the problem definition section and thus will not be repeated here. However, this concept of consumer goals has been integrated into a

consumer behavior model that has been used in an extensive series of experiments by Bauer and his associates. In most cases the experiments were not designed to test this assumption; nevertheless, some incidental evidence on the utility of the assumption can be gathered.

Role of group influence-- Cox.- In a study by Cox, a member of the Bauer group, there is a fragment of interesting evidence supporting Deutsch and Gerard's hypothesis that the influence of groups is not just toward social conformity, but that groups also provide useful functional information to persons.[1] Cox's study consisted of highly intensive interviews concerning the shopping behavior of only two subjects. He was trying to determine how these subjects went about reducing the risk that he hypothesized was inherent in the act of purchase. In the case of one subject, Martha, he found that she was motivated to buy products that were both functionally sound and socially approved. One way that she achieved this was through accepting group influence. Martha used the norms and practices of others both to assure that the products she bought were socially approved and that they were functionally sound. This supports the belief that consumers have both

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[1]Donald F. Cox, "Risk Handling in Consumer Behavior - An Intensive Study of Two Cases," in Cox, ed., *op. cit.*, see especially pp. 56-57.

psychosocial goals and functional or utilitarian goals which they attempt to achieve through their purchases. It also supports Deutsch and Gerard's idea that group influence does not represent only conformity, but also informational influence.

Studies of personality and persuasibility.- Bauer, Cox, and others of their associates conducted a series of experiments on the relationship between personality characteristics and the responsiveness of the subject to persuasion. These studies will be considered again later because they provide direct evidence concerning the information usefulness hypothesis. They also, however, provide some support for the usefulness of the proposed classification of consumer goals.

The relationship of personality to persuasibility has a long history in social psychology.[1] Two well-established findings are reviewed by Cox and Bauer.[2] The first is that people low in specific self-confidence (confidence in the ability to solve the specific problem before them) are more persuasible in that particular problem-solving situation than are people high in specific self-confidence.

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[1]Cox and Bauer, op. cit., give references on this topic.

[2]Ibid., pp. 394-395.

It has been argued that those low in specific self-confidence accept help because they need it to solve the problem they face. A second and separate finding has been that males (but not females) low in general self-confidence (self-esteem) are more readily persuaded than those high in general self-confidence. But in this case, it is argued that those low in self-esteem comply because they are more concerned with gaining social approval than are those who hold themselves in high esteem. In other words, in the first finding, it is assumed that people in a communication situation are motivated by an immediate problem-solving or utilitarian goal whereas in the second situation, the goal is assumed to be social.

The essence of the new series of experiments conducted by the Bauer group was that both generalized and specific self-confidence were examined in relationship to persuasibility among the same subjects in the same experiment. At the same time the experiments admit into the model the idea that people have problem-solving as well as psychosocial goals. Of interest, too, is the fact that some of the experiments were conducted in a consumer situation rather than in a general social communication situation.

One hypothesis in the experiments was that the resulting relationship between self-confidence (both specific and general) and persuasibility depends upon which

consumer goal is paramount--problem-solving or psychosocial.[1] This hypothesis follows the findings of Deutsch and Gerard, London and Lim, and Hochbaum cited earlier. The experiments indicate that problem-solving, ego-defense, and social goals are real and manipulatable variables. When the experimental situation involved subjects in a problem-solving situation (and thus the problem-solving or utilitarian goal was paramount) subjects used external influence in a way designed to solve the problem rather than to gain psychosocial benefits.

This finding is very similar to Bauer's finding, cited earlier of the way that physicians selected information sources for drugs. When they were in a risky (difficult problem-solving) situation, they used company reputation information to solve the problem, but when the problem was an easy one (not risky) they indulged themselves by seeking a psychosocial goal and followed the recommendation of a salesman.[2]

Source effect and consumer goals.- The idea that consumer goals include coping with everyday problems as well as social ingratiation and ego-defense has also been

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[1]See especially Cox and Bauer, op. cit., Kenneth J. Gergen and Raymond A. Bauer, "The Interactive Effects of Self-Esteem and Task Difficulty on Social Conformity," in Cox, ed., op. cit., and Jeffrey A. Barach, "Self-Confidence and Reactions to Television Commercials," in Cox, ed., op. cit.

[2]Bauer and Wortzel, op. cit.

applied by Bauer to the phenomenon of source effect.[1] Like the topic of personality and persuasibility, source effect has a long history in the mass communication literature. The general finding has been that the more credible the source, the more persuasive are its messages. But the traditional source effect model, like the traditional personality/persuasibility model, has assumed that the audience's goal is ego-defense or ingratiation of others. Bauer suggests that considering the full range of the audience's goals--solving of daily problems as well as psychosocializing--should provide greater understanding of source effect.

Bauer proposes a revised model of source effect that instead of considering credibility a unitary phenomenon as is traditionally done, proposes four dimensions. If a person's goal is problem-solving, the credibility dimensions of the source are competence (does he know what he is talking about?) and truthfulness (can I trust him?). If a person's goal is psychosocial, the relevant dimensions of source credibility are power (should I try to ingratiate him?) and likeability (do I like him enough to ingratiate him?).

One of the tests of this model was reported by Wilding and Bauer.[2] In the experiment, 292 housewives

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[1]Bauer, "Source Effect," op. cit.

[2]John Wilding and Raymond A. Bauer, "Consumer Goals and Reactions to a Communications Source," Journal of Marketing Research, V (February, 1968), 73-77.

evaluated two identical samples of carpet on performance and social features. They were then given a letter from a "manufacturers association" promoting the performance and social attributes of one of the samples after which they were asked to reevaluate the carpet and evaluate the information source. The sample was divided into those whose goal in this situation seemed more likely to be problem-solving and those whose goal seemed more likely to be psychosocial.

There are two findings of interest that arose from this experiment. The first is that the authors felt that they were successful in measuring and categorizing subjects in terms of their predominant desire either to functionally evaluate the product or to ingratiate other persons. Second, it was found that those categorized as having a problem-solving goal and those with a psychosocial goal experienced different source effects. The problem solvers were not influenced in their reaction to the message by their assessment of the source, but psychosocializers were affected by their assessment of the source. Although not noted by the authors, this finding is consistent with Rokeach's formulation of the open and closed belief system. Those with open belief systems, it will be recalled, are those concerned with problem-solving. It was predicted that they would be able to evaluate information on its own merits--independent of the source. Those with closed belief systems behave in response to social rewards and punishments. Thus they are

influenced in their evaluation of information by their evaluation of the source. These are just the findings confirmed by Wilding and Bauer.

In the words of Wilding and Bauer, "These findings reinforce the idea that the distinction between problem-solving and psychosocializing is meaningful."[1]

Social versus utilitarian goals and product type.- A final piece of consumer research to be reviewed in this section is the study of reference group influence conducted by Bourne.[2] He proposes that consumer buying behavior may be individualistic or socially conditioned, categories that appear to agree substantially with the utilitarian and social goals of Proposition 2. Bourne hypothesizes that a purchase is subject to reference group (social) influence if the product is conspicuous. Products are conspicuous if they can be seen and identified by others and they stand out if not everyone owns one. The influence of groups may extend to the product decision, the brand decision or both. Products not subject to social influence are ones bought on their own merit.

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[1] Ibid., p. 76.

[2] Francis S. Bourne, "Group Influence in Marketing and Public Relations," in Some Applications of Behavioral Research, ed. by Rensis Likert and Samuel P. Hayes, Jr. (Paris: UNESCO, 1957), pp. 207-257.

Bourne presents the results of tests in which a number of products were categorized according to the type of social influence exerted. In some cases, social influence determined whether the general type of product was purchased at all, and in some cases it influenced the brand selected. In other cases, social influence determined both purchase of the product and brand selected, and in still others, it appeared to have no influence at all. The tests tended to support the theoretical structure. These results support, in a limited way, the suggested classes of consumer goals by viewing the purchase decision as resulting either from the desire to psychosocialize or the desire for a product based on its own merit. The weakness of the structure is that it tends to look at the product type as the variable and consider that all consumers are alike in their view of the product. The view of this analysis, by contrast, holds that even with a single product, the market can be segmented according to the different goals that consumers are striving for.

Conclusion.- The assumption that consumer buying goals can be categorized as utilitarian, social, or ego-defensive is also one that would be difficult to prove. What has been demonstrated in the preceding sections is that (1) there is substantial theoretical support and research evidence in the general behavioral field that backs the assumption, and (2) in the specific area of consumer

behavior, the assumption has proved operational, consistent and has resulted in some meaningful new findings.

Selective Perception of Advertising

The third proposition

The first two propositions which have been presented have been concerned with what consumers are trying to achieve through the purchase of products. The third and fourth propositions are concerned with one aspect of how they go about the task. The point of view taken in these last two propositions continues to be one of looking through the consumers' eyes.

The specific concern of the next portion of the analysis is with the way in which consumers select information for use in the purchasing task. As the consumer goes about purchasing goods and services, what information does she want; what information will she select and use? It is clear that today's consumer is bombarded with a torrent of advertisements promising solution of problems and satisfaction of goals by purchase of a particular brand. The advertiser's advice is not only great in quantity, but also the consumer hears conflicting advice about the course of action she should follow.

In some way, consumers have to process or handle this incoming flow of information and decide which items

will be heeded and which ones discarded. There is evidence that consumers do, indeed, have this information selection ability, which is commonly termed selective perception. This evidence provides support for the third proposition which is:

> Proposition 3: Consumers have the ability to selectively perceive advertising, absorbing some of what they are exposed to and rejecting other advertiser information.

The concept of selective perception is one that is well accepted in the behavioral sciences, deriving particularly from mass communication theory. Consequently, the current effort in this field is not to substantiate the occurrence of selective perception but to explain the mechanism by which it takes place. Similarly, the effort in this analysis will concentrate more on exploring explanations of how this phenomenon takes place than it will on verifying its occurrence. It seems essential to explore in this section the popular explanations of selective perception since Proposition 4 will attempt to provide an alternate explanation particularly helpful to the understanding of the selective perception of advertising.

The concept of intervening variables

Before discussing the support for the idea of selective perception, it may be helpful for purposes of perspective to again explain the concept of intervening variables.

Katz and Lazarsfeld, reviewing the early history of mass communications research, note that early workers in the field believed that there was a rather direct relationship between a mass communication message and the resulting action.[1] The audience was viewed as inert and easily manipulated. As experimentation and field observation proceeded, however, it became increasingly apparent that audience response in many cases was non-existent or smaller than expected and, in many cases, was not in the direction expected.

This experience led to the idea of intervening variables. Something occurs between the presentation of the message and the resulting action thus mediating the effect. Fearing says behavioral responses to communications are not automatic or mechanical, but dependent upon ". . . the totality of cultural and personality factors which each respondent brings to the situation."[2] Mass communication thus turned to analysis and identification of these variables. Mendelsohn stated that the "new look" in mass communications research focuses on the mediating roles of psychological and sociological factors--the

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[1]Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Personal Influence (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1955), p. 20.

[2]Fearing, op. cit., p. 41.

interplay between personality, culture, and social structure.[1] Katz and Lazarsfeld, for example, specify five intervening variables that modify the effect in the mass communications process.[2] They are selective exposure, the type of medium, the presentation of the content, the predispositions of the audience, and the interpersonal situation in which and through which the communication flows.

As studies of communications effects and the nature of intervening variables accumulated, some generalizations began to appear. The Bauers, surveying the progress of mass communications research and its relationship to American society stated it thus: "Looking over a range of the situations in which mass media have been conspicuously effective, it appears that they have been effective to the extent that they have capitalized on extant attitudes and, explicitly or implicitly, have fed in 'facts' which have suggested an easily available course of action which serve those attitudes or values."[3] Klapper in his 1960 book reached a similar conclusion based on study of over one thousand studies, essays, and reports on mass communications. Generalizing on the effects of mass communications he states:

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[1]Harold Mendelsohn,"Sociological Perspectives on the Study of Mass Communication," in People, Society, and Mass Communications, ed. by Lewis Anthony Dexter and David Manning White (London: Collier-Macmillan, Ltd., The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), pp. 30-35.

[2]Katz and Lazarsfeld, op. cit., pp. 20-25.

[3]Bauer and Bauer, op. cit., p. 29.

1. Mass communication *ordinarily* does not serve as a necessary and sufficient cause of audience effects, but rather functions among and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences.

2. These mediating factors are such that they typically render mass communications a contributory agent, but not the sole cause, in a process of reinforcing the existing conditions. 1

Klapper goes on to state that when mass communication does create change, it is probably because the mediating factors are inoperative or are themselves impelling toward change.[2]

These generalizations by Klapper and the Bauers are strikingly parallel to findings made nearly two decades earlier by Borden on the effectiveness of advertising. One of the major findings of his study was that consumer needs are established by social, psychological, and cultural forces, not by advertising. To be effective, advertising must work with these forces. "Advertising creates needs only in the sense that it makes consumers aware that a product offers a satisfactory solution to a need."[3]

The purpose of reviewing these general findings on intervening variables is to show the general framework within which emotional or rational appeals operate. The general scheme presented here assumes that an advertising

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[1]Klapper, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Borden, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

message does not affect behavior directly, but rather, is filtered by a number of intervening variables. These intervening variables include cultural and social factors and factors internal to the individual. The general nature of these variables is such that they tend to screen out messages that are not in accord with the direction or tendency of the variable and admit those that are in accord with the variable.

The concepts of selective exposure, perception, recall, and effects

The major concern of this analysis is with those intervening variables that are internal to the audience member; that is, with the predispositions, needs, or attitudes of the audience. The filtering or screening action of these variables is thought to manifest itself in several ways.

One of these ways is selective attention or selective exposure. "People tend to see and hear communications that are favorable or congenial to their predispositions; they are more likely to see and hear congenial communications than neutral or hostile ones."[1] Another manifestation of these intervening variables is thought to be selective perception. "People tend to misperceive and misinterpret persuasive communications in accordance with

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[1]Berelson and Steiner, *op. cit.*, p. 529.

their own predispositions, by evading the message or by distorting it in a favorable direction."[1] A third result of intervening variables is selective recall. Recipients of persuasive communications are believed to selectively recall appeals in a manner consistent with existing predispositions; unacceptable communications are more likely to be forgotten.[2] And finally, intervening variables are thought to result in selective effects. "People respond to persuasive communications in line with their predispositions and they change or resist change accordingly."[3]

These four information screening results are not, of course independent of each other. The general thinking is that the process is cumulative or step-like. A communication contrary to intervening variables is likely not to be seen by the subject. If the communication is seen, it will likely be rejected or misinterpreted, but if correctly perceived, it will likely be forgotten or as an alternative, no action will be taken as a result of the message.

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[1] Ibid., p. 536.

[2] J. F. Engel, "The Influence of Needs and Attitudes on the Perception of Persuasion," Toward Scientific Marketing, ed.by Stephen A. Greyser (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1963),pp. 22-23.

[3] Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 540.

The criteria for selectivity

The concept of intervening variables and the resulting selectivity in information processing supports the idea that consumers process the information that they receive. It indicates that they somehow are able to accept congenial information and reject that which is counter to their interests.

This, of course, is no more than what Proposition 3 states, but clearly it would be desirable to know more about how the process of selection works. In fact, most work in this area now assumes audience information selectivity and goes on from there to examine how the selectivity process works. Some of these formulations and findings are examined below.

Preference for supportive information.- One formulation of the selectivity process, relating primarily to selective exposure, is that people have an inherent preference for supportive information. Hence, "people look for the programs and articles and news items that support their attitudes and beliefs and tend not to expose themselves to communications which conflict with their own viewpoints."[1]

There have been a substantial number of studies that have supported this explanation of the selectivity

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[1]Abelson, op. cit., p. 57.

process. Two will be noted here. In 1958, Schramm and Carter interviewed a sample of the viewers of a political telethon conducted by William Knowland.[1] The telethon was presented on several California television stations by Knowland who was seeking, as a Republican, the governorship of California. The authors found that Republicans were about twice as likely to view the telethon as were Democrats. The reason suggested was that Republicans could expect to find supportive information in the telecast and thus would expose themselves to it. Democrats, by contrast, would expect to hear conflicting information and thus would avoid the program.

In a second study, this one of a different type conducted by Ehrlich and others, the preference for information supporting a recently made decision was tested.[2] The study contrasted recent new car buyers with owners of older cars in their reading of advertisements for new cars. It was hypothesized that the new car buyers would seek out information supporting their purchase decision to give themselves confirmation in the wisdom of their selection.

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[1]Wilbur Schramm and Richard F. Carter, "Effectiveness of a Political Telethon," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIII (Spring, 1959), 121-126.

[2]Danuta Ehrlich, and others, "Postdecision Exposure to Relevant Information," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LIV (January, 1957), 98-102.

The test bore this out. New car owners read advertisements for cars which they had purchased more than for cars which they considered but did not purchase. Owners of older cars did not show this tendency. The study bears out the inclination to select supportive information.

Although substantial evidence of preference for supportive information has accumulated through the years, there are some reservations that need to be noted both as to the evidence and as to the applicability of the concept to advertising. First, the evidence supporting the idea of a preference for supportive information is correlative in nature. In most studies, exposure is correlated to some attitude on the part of the audience. Such findings do not, of course, prove causation, nor, more important here, do they explain the mechanism that is at work.

The inadequacy of the explanation provided by the concept is more apparent when some apparently contradictory findings are introduced. Feather conducted a study in which a sample, divided into smokers and non-smokers, was offered information on the relationship between smoking and lung cancer.[1] The preference for supportive information theory would predict that smokers would avoid exposure to information

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[1]N. T. Feather, "Cognitive Dissonance, Sensitivity, and Evaluation," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXVI (February, 1963), 157-163.

supporting the smoking-cancer relationship and select information not supporting the relationship. Yet the experiment showed, and the findings were replicated, that smokers were more interested than non-smokers in both types of information. Feather offers a hypothesis to explain these findings that will be presented later in support of the final proposition.

Another line of attack on the preference for supportive information approach has been to dispute the validity of some of the findings. Steiner, reexamining the data from two of the most widely quoted experimental studies supporting the formulation, finds that, "The two studies which are most widely quoted as indicating that people are more receptive to supportive than to adverse information do not provide sufficient support for that proposition."[1] Sears and Freedman reexamined data from several field and experimental studies often quoted as supporting the preference for supportive information and conclude, "The evidence available fails to indicate the presence of a general preference for supportive information."[2] The evidence pro and

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[1]Ivan D. Steiner, "Receptivity to Supportive Versus Nonsupportive Communications," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXV (October, 1962), 267.

[2]David O. Sears and Jonathan L. Freedman, "Selective Exposure to Information: A Critical Review," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXXI (Summer, 1967), 208.

con will not be adjudicated here. The purpose is only to indicate that selectivity based on preference for supportive information is open to question.

A final comment on this concept concerns the relationship of selective exposure to the field of advertising. Although the terminology may differ, the concept of selective exposure is not one that would surprise many advertising practitioners. But the seriousness of the problem is substantially offset by the fact that much advertising exposure is involuntary. Consumers do not voluntarily watch television in order to see advertisements, but as viewers of television programs, they are, almost involuntarily, exposed to advertising. This is what advertisers term the "intrusive" nature of the medium, a quality highly prized particularly for products deemed to have low inherent interest. The Bauer's comment, although not directed only at advertising communication, aptly summarizes this point: "Even though an individual may seek out only reinforcing information, the nature of communications is such that he will inevitably be exposed to contrary information. Every skillfull communicator capitalizes on this circumstance."[1] The concept of selective exposure due to a preference for supportive information appears at best to be a contributory phenomenon and an incomplete explanation of the information selection process.

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[1]Bauer and Bauer, op. cit., p. 28.

Information versus recommendation.- Another suggested way in which people select information is on the basis of whether it is information or recommendation. If the communication is informational in nature, it will be accepted, but if it is a recommendation or an attempt to exert influence, it is less likely to be accepted. Berelson and Steiner generalize the evidence as follows: ". . . people are more apt to accept (neutral) factual information from the media than to accept uncongenial editorial positions, interpretations, or evaluations."[1]

Two studies providing support and elaboration of this explanation come from World War II experiences. Carl Hovland and his associates studied the effectiveness of a series of armed forces indoctrination films that were designed to overcome prejudices, arouse motivations, and modify attitudes of members of the U.S. armed forces.[2] One of the general findings was that the films were effective in imparting factual information and in changing opinion when the opinions were closely related to the material in the film and the opinions offered were not distinguished from factual material. However, the films were not effective in changing more general opinions. One

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[1]Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 543.

[2]Carl I. Hovland, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, and Fred D. Sheffield, Experiments on Mass Communication (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), pp. 21, 53.

interpretation of this might be that material perceived as factual was accepted while persuasive material was rejected. Some credence is given to this interpretation by Hovland's analysis of the differential effect of the film. He found that those who imputed a "propagandistic" or "manipulative" intent to the film were less affected by it than were those who characterized the film as informational.[1] This suggests that the difference between information and recommendation depends upon the perceived intent of the communicator. People accept information, but resist manipulation.

Merton found something of the same phenomenon in his study of the wartime defense bond marathon staged on radio by Kate Smith.[2] The appeals used by Kate Smith were mainly emotional; two appeals specifically not used were that bonds were a sound investment and buying bonds was an inflation remedy.[3] These appeals were omitted because they were felt to be out of keeping with Smith's character. This omission, however, as Merton explains, had one interesting effect; "A minority of our informants, who understood the economic purpose of bonds, responded unfavorably to Smith's efforts to impart 'sentimental and emotional' reasons. It was this group, generally the more educated informants, who felt

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 100-101.

[2] R. K. Merton, *Mass Persuasion* (New York: Harper, 1946).

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-51.

that manipulative techniques rather than emotional arguments were being employed."[1] Again the suggested explanation is that people accept information, but resist manipulation.

The marketing theorist Alderson proposes that advertising messages contain two types of content--information and recommendation.[2] He does not, however, propose that consumers accept one and reject another type of content, but, rather, that both must be present to bring about a purchase decision.

While the resistance to manipulation idea seems helpful in some respects, it also seems to have some limitations in the field of advertising. The intent of advertising is not usually a hidden one; that is, it usually is overtly manipulative and it seems likely that consumers recognize this. If all advertising is manipulative, the concept gives little assistance in predicting which advertising will be accepted or which rejected. Nor does the distinction between information and recommendation seem particularly helpful. Field theory would seem to indicate that although an advertiser may feel that he puts both information and recommendation into an advertising message,

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[2] Alderson, *Dynamic Marketing Behavior*, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-129.

the audience does not view it in separate bits and pieces, but as a total Gestalt. It is the totality of the ad as perceived that is accepted or rejected.[1]

Personality and selectivity.- Another criterion by which communications are believed to be selected is in relationship to personality. The research in this area has been extensive and the literature is substantial in volume. Only some general outlines of the findings will be touched on here. The study of personality effects has been directed to two basic questions: (1) are there some people whose personality characteristics make them more likely to accept and act on persuasive communications, that is, is there a class of people who are generally more persuadable regardless of the topic? And (2) are there personality characteristics of a person that make him more likely to accept or reject a communication on a particular topic?[2]

On the topic of general persuasibility or a general readiness to accept persuasive communications, the best established finding is that persons with low self-esteem are more generally persuasible. The explanation generally

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[1]There is a counterview to this position. Tannenbaum's indexing process views a communication as a set of distinctive individually viewed signs or cues. See Percy H. Tannenbaum, "The Indexing Process in Communication," Public Opinion Quarterly, XIX (Fall, 1955), 292-302.

[2]Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, op. cit., pp. 174-175.

advanced for this is that people who hold their own judgment in poor regard tend to rely upon external information while people who have a strong self-image, are self-assured, and independent, tend to make up their own minds and not accept external information.[1]

NOTE

The topic of general persuasibility is of limited interest to this analysis since this study is concerned not with general persuasibility, but with the differential persuasibility in specific instances resulting from different appeals. For this reason, the second topic, the relationship between personality and the acceptability of communications on certain topics, is more relevant.

The basic assumption in this second topic is that a person tends to accept communications that are congruent with his personality characteristics. This assumes that externally produced variations in the communication itself have counterparts in internal, individual personality characteristics and that information selection is governed by selecting appeals that support and are consistent with individual personality needs.

Numerous studies illustrate this basic selective tendency. The Janis and Feshbach study of fear-arousing

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[1]Harriet Linton and Elaine Graham, "Personality Correlates of Persuasibility," in Personality and Persuasibility, by Irving L. Janis (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 93-99.

appeals in dental hygiene communications was summarized in a previous chapter. It will be recalled that the strong fear appeal was found to be less generally effective than the minimal fear appeal. However, data were also gathered on the differential effect of the appeal in terms of personality characteristics of the subjects.[1] It was found that the strong fear appeal was least effective among those whose personalities showed greatest anxiety. Thus those whose personalities most needed to be defended against anxiety were most apt to reject the fear appeal.

Two studies by Weiss and Fine also support this relationship between selectivity and personality. In their first study, they examined the relationship between the personality characteristic of punitiveness and communications urging aggressive action toward a group.[2] The results indicated that the highly aggressive communication was most effective among those subjects whose personalities were high in aggressive needs.

In their second study, Weiss and Fine studied the relationship between the same personality characteristic--aggressiveness--but this time with a more positive appeal.[3]

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[1]Janis and Feshbach, op. cit., p. 83.

[2]Walter Weiss and Bernard J. Fine, "Opinion Change as a Function of Some Intrapersonal Attributes of the Communicatees," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LI (September, 1955), 246-253.

[3]Walter Weiss and Bernard J. Fine, "The Effect of Induced Aggressiveness on Opinion Change," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LII (January, 1956), 109-114.

The communication attempted to induce a lenient opinion toward a group. As hypothesized, it was found that the lenient appeal communication was less effective with high aggressive personality types than with low aggressives.

The evidence concerning the role of personality in information effect reveals a relationship that will recur in later sections. Personality is a set of enduring predispositions rooted, as are attitudes, in deeper-lying needs and goals. Personality seems to serve to select information that is consistent with the deeper-lying needs of the individual.

Attitudes as intervening variables.- The subject of attitudes as intervening variables or as the mechanism of information selection is one that overlaps the variables reviewed earlier and also covers much ground outside the immediate interest of this analysis. Attitudes are a person's predispositions toward some thing or situation. Katz defines an attitude as a predisposition of an individual to evaluate some symbol, object, or aspect of his world in a favorable or unfavorable manner.[1] In modern formulations, attitudes contain both affective (like/dislike) elements and cognitive elements (beliefs). An opinion, says Katz, is the verbal expression of an attitude.

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[1] D. Katz, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-170.

Attitude development is seen primarily as a learning process that continues throughout life.[1] Early in one's life attitudes are learned from parents, but as a person grows up, he adopts new attitudes learned from social groups and other elements in his environment. The influence of groups in forming attitudes is believed by some to be particularly strong. For example, ". . . social attitudes, opinions on social issues are primarily group products. The opinion of an individual is a function of his group affiliations."[2] And "To begin with the most general proposition, we may state that the behavior, attitudes and beliefs of an individual are all firmly grounded in the groups to which he belongs."[3]

Attitudes, once developed, tend to be stable and persisting especially if given support. Attitudes organize into structures, sometimes called value systems. There is a tendency for people to develop attitudes that "hang together harmoniously," and when they do not, to change one or more of the attitudes to obtain consistency.[4]

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[1]Information on the development of attitudes drawn from Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., pp. 562-569.

[2]Eugene L. Hartley, "The Social Psychology of Opinion Formation," Public Opinion Quarterly, XIV (Winter, 1950-1951), 669.

[3]Cartwright, op. cit., p. 387.

[4]Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 578.

The general view of the relation between attitudes and persuasive communications is that people respond to communications that are in line with their attitudes and resist the influence if it conflicts with their attitudes. Thus, conclude Berelson and Steiner, "Communications are more effective in canalizing people's existing dispositions than they are in redirecting their responses into directions counter to their interests, social positions, and group memberships."[1] This is also a basic finding of Klapper's extensive review of communications research findings--"Mass communication functions far more frequently as an agent of reinforcement than as an agent of change."[2]

Attitudes, which function as guides to behavior, can also be viewed as a guiding mechanism that selects supportive information and rejects conflicting information. Thus communication is more likely effective when it is congruent with existing attitudes. This process is termed "canalization" by social psychologists. Does it apply to advertising communications? Klapper and other writers maintain that it does, even more so than in other fields of persuasion. Klapper says, "The efficacy of advertising . . . is believed by some observers to be largely due to its almost exclusive concern with such canalization."[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 541.

[2] Klapper, op. cit., p. 15.

[3] Ibid., p. 121.

However, the idea that advertising works almost exclusively as a canalizing agent conflicts with other views concerning the way in which advertising works. Most advertisers would agree that the ultimate objective of advertising in most business situations is to influence behavior--that is, to create sales. However, advertisers also tend to view consumer attitudes towards products as guides to action toward that product. Many have assumed that one way to achieve favorable behavior is to create favorable attitudes; thus advertising is given the objective of creating favorable attitudes. It is this assumption that underlies the so-called hierarchy of effects model of advertising and this model, in turn, is basic to most advertising effectiveness measurement techniques in use today.[1]

In the context of this analysis, there are two disquieting problems with the use of attitude change as an objective intermediate to a behavioral change. The first problem is with the assumption that behavior change follows attitude change. While this has shown sometimes to be true, it also appears that the opposite sequence is common. "A considerable body of common-sense observation, clinical

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[1]See for example Robert J. Lavidge and Gary A. Steiner, "A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness," and the response of Kristian S. Palda, "The Hypothesis of a Hierarchy of Effects: A Partial Evaluation," in Readings in Market Research, ed. by Keith K. Cox (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 137-143, and pp. 144-169.

data, and more recently experimental findings indicates that in many instances attitude change follows after behavioral change."[1] Marketers, in fact, take advantage of this characteristic. They use premiums, contests, and bargain sales to influence the behavior of those with adverse attitudes toward the product in the hope that the behavior will then lead to a more favorable attitude.

A second problem with attitude change as an intermediate objective of advertising is the previously mentioned stability of attitudes. Studies indicate that attitudes are difficult to change and change only slowly. Changing them would present a difficult objective to advertising. There are several possible counters to this difficulty. Bauer, as noted earlier, reasons that advertisers can be satisfied with smaller changes than are deemed successful in social research projects.[2] Klapper suggests that advertising may have a less difficult job to do than does social propaganda. "The apparently greater power of the media in the consumer advertising sphere may well be due, at least in part, to the fact that persuasion in such cases is usually focused upon matters which are not likely to be particularly ego-involving for many members of the mass audience."[3] Hovland suggests

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[1]Bauer and Bauer, op. cit., p. 30.

[2]Bauer, "Obstinate Audience," op. cit., pp. 321-322.

[3]Klapper, op. cit., pp. 45-47.

that advertising may be involved in "preference modification," a simpler change than attitude modification. ". . . the commercial advertiser does not try primarily to convert, e.g., those who do not brush their teeth to the practice of brushing their teeth; his prime purpose is to stamp in--for those who do brush their teeth--an associative link between the genus, tooth cleanser, and a sub genus, a particular brand of tooth cleanser."[1]

But Rokeach offers a more interesting observation that perhaps ties in with Hovland's suggestion and also offers a way of thinking about advertising's relationship to attitudes.[2] He states that behavior is guided by at least two attitudes: the attitude toward a situation and the attitude toward an object. Social scientists, he feels, have tended to focus on attitudes toward objects without regard to the varying situations in which they appear. This tends to make the manifestation of an attitude take unanticipated directions since its expression will vary with the situation. Although Rokeach does not apply this formulation to advertising, an interpretation might be that advertising, to the extent that it is operative in changing attitudes, is directed to attitudes towards objects, not attitudes towards

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[1]Hovland, "Mass Media," op. cit., p. 1091.

[2]Milton Rokeach, "Attitude Change and Behavioral Change," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXX (Winter, 1966-1967), 529-550.

situations. In terms of Hovland's example above, advertising is directed at building attitudes toward a brand of tooth paste, given the desirability of clean teeth (attitude toward object) rather than toward encouraging the desirability of having clean teeth (attitude toward situation). If this is a valid application of Rokeach's thought, it provides explanatory support for an important belief in the advertising literature. As stated by Borden, "Advertising creates needs only in the sense that it makes consumers aware that a product offers a satisfactory solution to a need."[1] That is advertising does not create the need situation, but does create attitudes toward the suitability of a product for a particular existing situation.

Good Conversation

Support to premise

In order for this formulation by Rokeach to be a helpful explanation of how advertising works with respect to attitudes, it must also be assumed that attitudes toward objects are more amenable to change than are attitudes toward situations. If both types of attitudes are highly stable, highly enduring, then the formulation offers little promise and little explanation of advertising's sometime success. Katz, in his functional approach to the study of attitudes, offers some encouragement in this respect.

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[1]Borden, op. cit., p. 194.

> The area of freedom for changing utilitarian [object] attitudes is of course much greater in dealing with methods of satisfying needs than with needs themselves. Needs change more slowly than the means for gratifying them, even though one role of the advertiser is to create new needs. Change in attitudes occurs more readily when people perceive that they can accomplish their objectives through revising existing attitudes. 1

Another intriguing although speculative bit of support comes from the investigation of advertising believability reported by Maloney.[2] In an experiment testing the relationship between believability of advertisements for several food products and "readiness-to-serve" the products after exposure to the ad, no correlation was found. The people reporting that there was something "hard to believe" in the ad had the same improvement in "readiness-to-serve" the products as did those who found nothing "hard to believe" in the ad. One explanation of these surprising results (this explanation is not the one that Maloney offers) is that the attitude toward the situation (the need to provide food for family or for a social occasion) was the dominant and enduring attitude. The advertisement for some, contradicted the attitude toward object (suitability of this food) and thus was "hard to believe." Yet the situational attitude

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[1]D. Katz, op. cit., p. 178.

[2]John C. Maloney, "Curiosity Versus Disbelief in Advertising," Journal of Advertising Research, II (June, 1962), 2-8. See also John C. Maloney, "Is Advertising Believability Really Important?" Journal of Marketing, XXVII (October, 1963), 1-8.

was dominant and the object attitude relatively easy to change, so the ad succeeded in changing the attitude toward object. Klapper explains that one circumstance in which attitude change might take place is when the individual is subject to cross pressures, that is, when conflicting attitudes are called into play.[1] This seems just such a case.

Perhaps at this point it would be well to summarize briefly the role of attitudes in the information selection process as it has been developed here. The attempt here has been to reconcile the behavioral science view that advertising can work only in reinforcing existing attitudes with the counterview that advertising works by first creating favorable attitudes or modifying unfavorable attitudes. Another way of looking at the question is to ask whether attitudes act to screen out all unfavorable communications or whether some conflicting messages can get through and change the intervening variable. Using Rokeach's formulation, it has been suggested that a consumer purchase involves two kinds of attitudes. First, there is an attitude toward situation that reflects the need or goal of the individual. Advertising usually cannot and does not try to change this attitude. Second, there is an attitude toward objects, reflecting the individual's evaluation of the effectiveness

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[1]Klapper, op. cit., pp. 77-79.

of the object in satisfying the goal. These attitudes are more amenable to change and advertising can affect them. The same formulation can be expressed in terms of the information selection process. Attitudes that reflect needs and goals are particularly strong and enduring. Information in conflict with them will be strongly resisted, but information that promises goal satisfaction will be accepted even if it conflicts with earlier evaluations of objects. Thus attitudes toward objects are more easily changed and act as a screening device subservient to goal attitudes.

Finally, this formulation indicates that any given consumer purchase is the result of the interaction between the consumer's goal and his evaluation of the ability of a product to help him achieve that goal. Attitudes act as a device for screening information in terms of its relevance to the goal being pursued.

Information screening in cognitive theory.- In recent years the concept of attitude has been developed and broadened from a simple predisposition toward something to the concept of an integrated, balanced, and consistent structure made up of cognitions (beliefs), habits of action, and affective (like/dislike) predispositions.[1] Cognitive theory

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[1]Milton Rosenberg, "Inconsistency Arousal and Reduction in Attitude Change," in Current Studies in Social Psychology, ed. by Ivan D. Steiner and Martin Fishbein (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), pp. 122-123.

assumes that the individual, in pursuit of goals, arranges his perception of the outside world in a way that provides a guide or a framework of action towards the goal. "In brief, we do not simply react to a world of things which are 'there.' Rather, we establish very complicated interdependent relationships between the world out there and ourselves as organisms with needs, values, and attitudes."[1] This system of interrelated perceptions is termed a person's cognitive structure.

A person's cognitive structure serves not only as a framework of action toward a goal, but also as a device for determining what external information will be accepted and how it will be perceived. A person's cognitive structure tends to remain stable and consistent. Cartwright, from whom this explanation is drawn, bases his explanation on studies made of Treasury Department war bond campaigns.[2] He illustrates the stability of cognitive structure by noting that over the thirty months of seven war loan drives the population's response to the question: "Why do you think the Government is anxious to get people to buy bonds?" remained unchanged over the entire period despite massive government campaigns to educate people to the true purposes of the loan program. People simply would not change their

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[1]Fearing, op. cit., p. 46.

[2]Cartwright, op. cit., pp. 297-306.

early established cognitive structures even though they were in conflict with "facts" presented in communications campaigns. If a communication is presented which is not consistent with the cognitive structure, a tension or disequilibrium is created which the person attempts to relieve. This can be accomplished by rejecting the message, by distorting it to fit, or by changing the cognitive structure itself. The change in the cognitive structure, according to Cartwright, can take either the form of a modification of goals--a difficult task for mass media--or a modification of the belief about what object or activity leads to what goal. Cartwright states: ". . . a person can be induced to do voluntarily something that he would otherwise not do only if a need can be established for which this action is a goal or if the action can be made to be seen as a path to an existing goal."[1] In the bond drives, Cartwright notes, when people were asked why they bought bonds, the response was in terms of their goals--to help win the war, to get the boys back home, to provide for the future, etc.

The similarity between this cognitive theory of information processing and that just presented under attitude theory is quite clear. Both see behavior and information screening a result of two interrelated variables--the person's goals and his evaluation of the ability of some

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[1] Ibid., p. 302.

object to help achieve that goal. Of the two variables, both approaches agree that goals are the more difficult of the two to change.

An important development stemming from cognitive theory has been a number of cognitive consistency or homeostatic formulations. These theories, now numbering perhaps as many as a dozen, vary from very specific to rather general, but all of them are concerned to some degree with attitude change and the way in which communications influence attitude.[1] Each of these formulations is based upon the idea that the individual's psychological structure is made up of integrated, organized sets of beliefs, values, and actions and that there is a continual striving for consistency between the elements of this structure. Maccoby and Maccoby state that each of these theories involves "a kind of balance-of-forces approach in which the overloading of one type of factor gives rise to changes designed to restore balance. In short, all employ homeostasis in some form or other."[2] This overloading of one factor can occur

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[1]Three excellent reviews are N. Maccoby and E. Maccoby, "Homeostatic Theory in Attitude Change," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXV (Winter, 1961), 538-545, Robert B. Zajonc, "The Concepts of Balance, Congruity, and Dissonance," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV (May, 1960), 280-296, and Arthur R. Cohen, Attitude Change and Social Influence (New York: Basic Books, 1964), pp. 62-79.

[2]Maccoby and Maccoby, op. cit., pp. 538-539.

through the introduction of new information. The theories deal with the means by which equilibrium is restored.

These information handling patterns are similar to those suggested earlier by Cartwright. If the information in the communication is supportive or consistent with the psychological structure, it will be accepted and used to strengthen the structure. If the new information is incompatible, a drive or tension will be set up to reduce this incompatibility. One outcome of the drive may be a change in attitude or a psychological restructuring. Because of the stability of the structure, this outcome does not usually occur unless other outcomes are blocked. The psychological structure may refuse to hear or accept the message or may distort it so that it does not conflict. Alternatively the existing attitude may be strengthened against the new information by the individual actively seeking additional information that supports the old position. Another possibility is to derogate the source of the new information--that is, to decide that it is not believable. Or the information may be accepted but isolated from those elements with which it is not consistent.

This listing is just illustrative of the detail found in these many formulations. There are two thoughts which might be extracted from them in support of this analysis. The first is that individuals have the power (and exercise it) to process incoming information in various ways.

This takes the form not only of accepting and rejecting what information is offered, but also of seeking counter-balancing information. Second, there is the notion of the tendency toward consistence not only between attitudes but also between attitudes, emotions and actions. This does not mean that people never act in a way inconsistent with their attitudes, but that over the long pull, there is a tendency, a drive toward consistency of belief, feeling, and action. This, of course, is relevant to the earlier discussion of whether advertising should focus on attitudes or on behavior. These formulations seem to indicate that since attitudes and behavior tend to be consistent with each other, promotion, by influencing either element, would over the long term influence both.

Information Selection in Terms of Perceived Relevance and Usefulness

The fourth proposition

It was hopefully established in the preceding section that consumers have and utilize the power to select from the multitude of advertising messages that reach them those which they will accept and either act upon or store for future reference. Some ideas concerning the selection mechanism and the selection criteria were also examined.

The intent of this section is to offer one criterion for information selection that is believed highly important

in the field of advertising. This fourth assumption relies heavily on the first three propositions and the ideas which support them. The important ideas that must be carried forward and related to this final proposition are these. First, it is assumed that consumer behavior is directed by a desire to achieve goals which reflect basic human needs. These goals, it has further been assumed, can be categorized as being concerned with utilitarian or practical matters of life, with establishing or protecting one's desired self-concept, and with establishing desired social relations. It has further been assumed that in pursuit of these goals, consumers utilize information about products--information concerning what satisfaction can be anticipated from what product. Some of this information is stored within the person in the form of attitudes toward various products. Other information will be selected preliminary to actual purchase. The review of attitude theory and of cognitive theory indicates that the information selected will be determined by two variables--the goal which the consumer is pursuing and the existing attitudes toward the products under consideration. Of these two variables, the dominant one is the consumer's goal, but the one which advertising can influence is the attitude towards products.

NOTE THIS POINT

These assumptions and ideas lead rather directly to the fourth proposition:

Proposition 4: Consumers accept (and seek) information that is relevant and useful to the achievement of their goals and to the overcoming of problems arising in the pursuit of their goals.

Evidence supporting goal usefulness as an information selection criteria

The formulations of the selective perception process, particularly the studies of attitudes and cognitive theory, provide general support for the idea that usefulness in goal achievement is a criterion for information selection. However, there are also numerous studies that touch more directly on information usefulness and relevance as a variable. Some of these findings will be described in the balance of this section.

Information usefulness in general surveys.- Much of the information supporting this fourth proposition is derived from individual studies from the field of mass communications. But in addition to these individual studies, there have been a number of attempts to summarize and pull together a wide range of findings regarding communications effects. Some of these summarizers seem to support the information usefulness assumption. Klapper, in his very extensive review mainly of field studies on communication, repeatedly expresses the theme that communications research indicates that people can be persuaded to implement existing needs, but that communications are not generally effective in developing new needs. "Persuasion is more likely to be effective when

it can make the opinion or behavior it espouses appear to the audience to be a mode of satisfying their existing needs."[1] This applies particularly, according to Klapper, to advertising. Advertising works, in other words, when it shows people how to reach a goal.

The Bauers in their review of the social effects of mass communication strike a similar note, concluding, ". . . it is not ordinarily difficult to influence behavior providing the message contains information relevant to the audience's attitudes and motives."[2]

Berelson and Steiner, speaking of the determinants of selective exposure (one method of screening information), conclude, "Interest remains the single most important determinant of exposure."[3] But what is "interest"? According to Fearing, it is vulnerability to those aspects of a situation which are relevant to the needs that are dominant at the moment.[4] In other words, people expose themselves to communications that they think may help them to achieve whatever goal they are then pursuing.

Information usefulness in cognitive theory.- There are several cognitive theorists to whom reference has been

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[1]Klapper, op. cit., p. 121.

[2]Bauer and Bauer, op. cit., p. 31.

[3]Berelson and Steiner, op. cit., p. 531.

[4]Fearing, op. cit., p. 57.

made in the course of this analysis. Some of them have something to say on the idea of information usefulness as an information selection device.

Fearing describes an individual's response to a communication as being shaped by the person's cognitive structure which acts to isolate, select, and interpret those features of the environment (such as a communication) which appear related to the goal that he is pursuing.[1] The individual, says Fearing, selects for use those messages about the world around him that appear to be "relevant" to the needs and values that are particularly important at the moment.[2]

Davison offers a formulation somewhat similar to Fearing's in that it sees human behavior as an effort by individuals to satisfy needs and achieve goals by establishing a satisfying relationship with the environment.[3] Communications provide a link between man and his environment by reporting changes in the environment (such as a new product), by pointing out uses of the environment to satisfy a need (advertising of an existing product), or by advocating a new way of relating to the environment (new use of an

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[1] Ibid., pp. 39-67.

[2] Ibid., p. 57.

[3] Davison, op. cit., pp. 70-89.

existing product) to better satisfy needs. In all three cases, says Davison, a communication will cause behavior change or be stored for future reference (an attitude) only if it is perceived as "useful." Davison's theory suggests that a communicator can influence attitudes or behavior only when he is able to convey information that the audience can utilize in satisfying needs. It was this line of thinking that led Davison to conclude, as quoted earlier, that the communicator must view the audience as an active participant in the communications process, ". . . the audience is made up of individuals who demand something from the communications to which they are exposed, and who select those that are likely to be useful to them."[1]

These formulations present a rather unified picture of the criteria by which communications are accepted. If a communication presents information that is seen by the consumer as helping her to achieve existing goals, it will be accepted and acted upon.

Information utility studies.- Sears and Freedman, in their analysis of selective exposure, suggest that in a number of studies the "utility of the information" appears to be an important variable that was not anticipated or

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[1] Ibid., p. 89.

controlled in accounting for results.[1] For example, Adams conducted a test designed to show preference for supportive information by those who had recently been exposed to a communication advocating a position contrary to their own.[2] The opinion issue was the relative influence of hereditary versus environmental factors in child behavior. When offered the choice of a second talk on the same topic but advocating one position or the other, the subjects did tend to select a supportive point of view. But it is also noteworthy that overall, subjects preferred to hear the talk on the role of environmental factors in child behavior. One interpretation of this, suggested by Sears and Freedman, is that it was chosen because of its utility--environmental factors were ones that a person could do something about, thus the information had practical usefulness. The influence of heredity, by contrast, was not a controllable factor and therefore information on it had less utility.

Similarly, Maccoby and others found that a pamphlet on toilet training was requested and read more by women who had a child between the ages of three and twelve months than those with an older child. Sears and Freedman suggest

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[1]Sears and Freedman, op. cit., pp. 210-211. This review contains full bibliography for articles mentioned in this section plus other relevant articles not covered here.

[2]J. S. Adams, "Reduction of Cognitive Dissonance by Seeking Consonant Information," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, LXII (January, 1961), 74-78.

again that this is simply a reflection of the greater utility of the information to mothers with children at the toilet-training age, even though this was not the point intended by the study.

Sears and Freedman go on to examine other supporting studies and conclude, "the evidence strongly supports the contention that information that is expected to serve a practical purpose is preferred to less useful information. . . . the effects are large and highly significant."[1]

Another study highly relevant to this issue is Feather's study on the receptivity to information supporting and information not supporting a relationship between cigerette smoking and lung cancer.[2] As explained earlier, the study unexpectedly found that regular smokers were more interested in both types of information than were non-smokers. Feather was testing the hypothesis from Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory that prior to commitment to a course of action a person, in order to reach a decision, impartially seeks information both pro and con on the issue. But after the decision is made, the individual will seek and accept only information that supports the action taken.[3]

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[1]Sears and Freedman, op. cit., p. 211.

[2]Feather, op. cit., pp. 157-163.

[3]Leon Festinger, Conflict, Decision, and Dissonance (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 1-7.

Feather's findings contradict this hypothesis and suggest that relevant information both pro and con is also sought after commitment. Feather's own explanation is that, "A person who is engaged in a course of action or who holds a certain attitude or opinion tends to be more sensitive to information relevant to this course of action, attitude, or opinion than a person not behaving in that way or not holding that attitude or opinion. This greater sensitivity occurs irrespective of whether the information supports or does not support the course of action, attitude, or opinion."[1]

A final study to be noted, again one which was mentioned earlier, is Bauer's research with Russian refugees.[2] It will be recalled that these refugees consistently cited word-of-mouth as an important source of news rather than the frequent official meetings which were designed to provide news. Bauer cites this as an example of the failure to recognize the audience as a participant in the communications process. It is not a greatly different interpretation to suggest that the refugees considered word-of-mouth as their prime source of information because it yielded a greater proportion of relevant and useful information.

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[1]Feather, op. cit., p. 162.

[2]Bauer, "The Initiative of the Audience," op. cit., p. 4.

Information usefulness and order of presentation.- There is a substantial body of literature on the question of the effects of varying the order of presentation in a communication. While most of this information does not relate closely to this analysis, there is one study that does seem to support the assumption that information usefulness and relevance is an important basis on which communications are accepted. Cohen conducted a study of the relative effectiveness of communications with need arousal information positioned before information to satisfy the need, compared to the reverse order.[1] The hypothesis, which was supported by the experiment, was that "information relevant to need satisfaction, when presented after strong needs have been aroused, will be more readily seen as satisfying those needs than information presented before need arousal."[2] What Cohen did was not to manipulate the information itself, but rather the clarity with which it was perceived as useful and relevant. The assumption was that if the information were perceived as need satisfying, it would be accepted. The experiment did indicate that when need arousal was positioned first in the communication, the total communication was more readily accepted.

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[1]Arthur R. Cohen, "Need for Cognition and Order of Communication as Determinants of Opinion Change," in Carl I. Hovland, The Order of Presentation in Persuasion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 79-94.

[2]Ibid., p. 80.

Information usefulness in problem-solving situations.- A final group of studies that lends support to the information relevance and usefulness proposition is concerned with people's use of information in problem-solving situations. Although these studies vary substantially in purpose and technique, the aspect of interest to this analysis is the difference in acceptance of information between those facing a problem and those not facing a problem or the difference in acceptance of information as problem difficulty is increased. An implication of the information usefulness proposition is that those facing a problem should be more likely to accept relevant information than those not facing a problem and that the desire for information should increase with the perceived difficulty of the problem.

Hochbaum proposed the above relationship some years ago in relation to social group influence.[1] Assuming that individuals use social groups to validate non-objective opinions, Hochbaum hypothesized that "a person's dependence on social reference is inversely related to his confidence in his competence to judge the issue in question."[2] In terms of this analysis, a decline in confidence to judge the issue is the equivalent of an increase in the difficulty of the problem and greater reliance in the group's position

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[1]Hochbaum, op. cit., pp. 678-687.

[2]Ibid., p. 679.

on the issue represents greater desire for external information relevant to the issue. Hochbaum's experiment supported his hypothesis.

Recently London and Lim demonstrated a similar effect, but in this case, task difficulty was the manipulated variable.[1] Their experiments indicated that individual conformity to majority judgments in a small group increased directly with task difficulty. Again, this might be interpreted as supporting the idea that as a problem becomes more difficult, external information becomes more useful, hence more acceptable.

The Hovland group's wartime study of armed forces indoctrination films provides a relevant fragment of information. In one experiment, one group of viewers of the film were told before seeing the film that they would be given a test on the content after viewing the film. In another group, no test announcement was made. It was found when the test was administered to both groups that more learning had occurred in the groups where the test was announced than in those where it was unannounced. These results, of course, confirm a rather general pedagogical assumption about the incentive value of examinations. One way of interpreting these results is that by announcing the test, the audience

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[1] London and Lim, op. cit., pp. 75-89.

suddenly perceived the content of the film as both relevant and useful in a problem that faced them, a test.[1]

Some of the studies of personality and persuasibility by Bauer and associates also demonstrate that consumers are responsive to communications perceived as useful to solution of a problem that they are facing. In Cox and Bauer's study, in which subjects were asked to evaluate nylon stockings, those who were uncertain of their ability to perform the task were more willing to accept the help of an outside source of information than were those who were confident of their ability to perform the task.[2] The confident subjects perceived little problem and thus did not find offered information useful. The uncertain subjects, by contrast, faced a difficult problem and were more receptive to useful information.

Barach's study in which consumers selected a preferred brand in a number of consumer package-goods categories and then were exposed to a television commercial for one of those products reported similar results.[3] Those subjects who reported that they were not confident in their brand selection were more influenced by the recommendation of

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[1]Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, op. cit., pp. 261-262.

[2]Cox and Bauer, op. cit., pp. 394-410, and Cox, "Risk Handling in Consumer Behavior," op. cit., pp. 619-620.

[3]Barach, op. cit., pp. 428-441.

the television commercial than were those who were confident of their initial selection.

In an experiment by Gergen and Bauer, the difficulty of the task performed was manipulated rather than using the subject's confidence as a variable.[1] As was expected, it was found that as the difficulty of the task increased, acceptance of outside information increased. (It was further hypothesized, but only partially supported, that as the task became extremely difficult, subjects would be less influenced by outside sources since the problem would appear insoluble.)

There thus seems ample support for the idea that people who perceive that they are faced with a problem would feel greater usefulness for relevant information and thus be more willing to accept external communications.

Application of the Model

Review of assumptions

Four basic propositions have now been presented together with supporting information that has been derived from the behavioral sciences. The propositions are interrelated, and, taken together, they constitute what might be

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[1]Gergen and Bauer, *op. cit.*, pp. 411-427.

termed a fragment of a model--a partial explanation of the advertising process.

The explanation attempted, which deals only with the interaction of the consumer with the advertisement, is a partial one in several respects. It is not asserted that the consumer-advertisement relationship described is the only one that occurs, only that it is an important one. The explanation is also partial in that the advertisement-consumer relationship is only one of several strategic considerations that must be integrated. The advertiser must also reckon with the competitive situation and with the realities of his particular product--what it will or will not do, what it costs, what changes or variations can be made, production problems and so on. There are also legal restrictions, problems of coordination between brands within a firm and countless other business problems. The explanation is also partial in that the evidence presented has been drawn from the contemporary U.S. society. And for the most part, the discussion has been concerned with advertising to final consumers of mass use products.

note editorial style

The central argument presented in this view of advertising has been that to understand which advertising appeals will be effective and which will not, it is essential to view advertising through the eyes of the consumer. This way of thinking argues that consumers have information needs much as they have product needs. When products are

marketed that do not meet consumer needs, they are not purchased. When advertisements about products are offered that do not meet consumers' information needs, those appeals, likewise, are rejected.

The line of argument presented by the four propositions can be very briefly summarized here. First, it was proposed that consumers be viewed not as an inert mass to be manipulated by the advertiser. Instead it was suggested that an individual who is shopping for a product should be viewed as a person who is actively seeking to achieve goals and overcome problems. It was proposed, secondly, that consumer goals can be categorized as utilitarian, ego-defensive, and social. Social goals are concerned with building and maintaining satisfying relations with other people and groups. Ego-defensive goals are concerned with establishing and protecting one's self-concept. Utilitarian goals are concerned with the functional problems of coping with one's environment.

The third and fourth assumptions are concerned with the way in which consumers utilize information in the pursuit of these goals. Consumers' purchases are designed to move the individual toward the satisfaction of goals. The decision as to what product or brand to purchase is determined by his perception of what outcomes will result from various purchase alternatives. These product perceptions are derived from information, some gathered during the shopping process

and others recalled from storage in the form of attitudes. Consumers are exposed to much more product information than they can act on either by storing or by making a purchase decision. Consequently they screen incoming information and act only on a portion of it. There are many suggested explanations of the selection mechanism and the criteria by which information is selected. Proposition four suggests that consumers screen information in terms of its usefulness and relevance to the achievement of current or anticipated goals.

The information usefulness proposition was also related to current thinking about attitudes. It was suggested that attitudes represent stored information that predispose the consumer to certain patterns of response. Following Rokeach's formulation, a consumer purchase decision can be thought of as the result of two attitudes--an attitude or predisposition toward some goal and an attitude toward the goal-satisfying qualities of some object. Generally, it was argued, advertising does not serve to create goals or attitudes toward goals. Rather, advertising is effective when it demonstrates the relevance or usefulness of a product to an existing goal.

Application to utilitarian versus psychosocial advertising appeals

The purpose of the entire analysis of this chapter thus far has been to build an explanation of advertising

effects so that it can be applied to an important and practical advertising problem. It will be recalled that the business problem to which this analysis is addressed is to determine conditions under which "emotional" advertising appeals should be used and conditions under which "rational" appeals should be used. "Rational" appeals were defined as ones which stress product performance or the instrumental benefits of the products. "Emotional" appeals were defined as those that stress the social or psychological benefits of the product.

The hypothesized solution to this problem is a rather straightforward application of the model. "Rational" appeals, better termed product-performance benefits are seen as the advertising appeal counterpart of utilitarian consumer goals. In other words, an advertiser's product-performance appeals offer solutions to consumers' utilitarian, everyday, functional problems. It is hypothesized, then, that if the consumer anticipates or is in the market seeking to solve a utilitarian problem or reach a utilitarian goal, she will find an advertiser's product-performance information useful. She will thus accept this information for action or storage.

Parallel reasoning applies to "emotional" or psychosocial appeals. These are the counterpart of ego-defensive and social goals. When the consumer's goal is to enhance her ego or to establish her relationship with a

group, she will find useful that advertising which describes psychosocial benefits of the product such as its exclusiveness, the type of people who use it or the way it will make the buyer appear to others.

More formally stated, the hypothesis is as follows:

> The relative effectiveness of a product-performance advertising appeal versus psychosocial benefit advertising appeal depends upon the perceived usefulness and relevance of the information to the audience in a given situation; product performance appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is utilitarian, psychosocial appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is ego-defense or social approval.

Hypothesis

As discussed earlier, an effective ad could mean either a change in attitude toward the product (information stored for later use) or a change in behavior (information acted upon).

Evidence supporting the hypothesis

The chief support for the hypothesis stems from the model itself. It is hoped that the individual propositions have been adequately supported and that when taken as a whole, the hypothesis proceeds logically from them.

There is also, however, some evidence from other studies that relates in various degrees of directness to this hypothesis. It is reviewed below.

The Harvard Studies.- The model used by Bauer and his associates in the various experiments that have been

mentioned earlier appears to include the proposition that consumers will be more responsive to information that is relevant and useful to the problem which they face. Although this proposition was not tested directly in any of these studies, some consistent data do emerge from some of them.

Perhaps the most relevant findings from this Harvard group of studies come from Bell's study of consumer automobile purchase patterns.[1] His study was directed to an exploration of the relationship between self-confidence and persuasibility and of the consequences of "buyer's remorse" or cognitive dissonance after purchase. In the study of patterns of automobile purchases, Bell noted that many buyers brought along a "purchase pal." These pals he interpreted as being sources of information. The "purchase pals" were then categorized as being close friends or casual friends. It was assumed that close friends were selected as "purchase pals" because they were a source of psychosocial information whereas casual friends were selected because they had technical competence and could provide product-performance information. Consumers were grouped according to their general self-confidence and their specific self-confidence. It was found that those consumers who were high in general self-confidence (and thus able to solve their psychosocial

[1] Gerald D. Bell, "Self-Confidence, Persuasibility, and Cognitive Dissonance Among Automobile Buyers," in Cox, editor, *op. cit.*, pp. 456-459.

problems) but low in specific self-confidence (that is, in doubt about their technical auto purchasing ability) were more apt to use a casual friend as a "purchase pal." By contrast, consumers low in general self-confidence (thus in need of social support) but high in specific self-confidence (and thus sure of their technical ability in car purchasing) were far more likely to use a close friend as "purchase pal." Although this interpretation of the evidence contains some rather substantial assumptions, it is consistent with the idea that consumers differentiate between product-performance information and psychosocial information depending on the problem that faces them.

Similar supporting evidence comes from Bauer's study of physicians' choice of drug brands.[1] The evidence, as in Bell's study, depends upon an assumption about the nature of information sources. In this study, which was reviewed earlier, it was assumed that the drug detail man (company salesman) was a psychosocial source while company reputation was a product-performance source. It was further proposed that when a physician had to select a drug that he considered risky, his goal was the utilitarian one of making a safe choice, but when the product selection was not risky, the physician could afford to indulge his psychosocial goals.

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[1]Raymond A. Bauer, "Risk Handling in Drug Adoption: The Role of Company Preference," in Cox, editor, *op. cit.*, pp. 524-540.

True to these assumptions, it was found that when the drug choice was risky, the doctor was twice as influenced by company reputation as by the detail man whereas when the drug choice was not risky, company reputation and the detail man were equally influential.

Another of the Harvard group, Derek Newton, presents a marketing communications model for sales management that includes the proposition that communication effectiveness is determined in part by the perceived relevance of the message to the audience member's problem.[1] There are, however, no test data supporting either this assumption or the model as a whole.

Harold Mendelsohn.- A study by Mendelsohn identifies and analyzes critically two schools of thought on the measurement of the effects of communications.[2] The learning theory approach, he feels, is weak because it equates learning with effect, but does not explain the process by which learning translates to action. The Columbia or sociological approach sees action resulting from social motivation. But, says Mendelsohn, the measures used are gross and too multivariate.

Mendelsohn offers a substitute for these measures, suggesting that action is induced not just by learning, but

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[1] Derek A. Newton, "A Marketing Communications Model for Sales Management," in Cox, editor, op. cit., pp. 579-602.

[2] Harold Mendelsohn, "Measuring the Process of Communications Effect," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXVI (Fall, 1962), 411-416.

by learning accompanied by emotion. Thus, the greater the individual's involvement with the communication, the more effective the communication. The author presents the Active Response Scale, a measure that distinguishes between various levels or intensities of response and thus the effectiveness of communications.

While the foregoing description is somewhat peripheral to the current topic, Mendelsohn's test application of the Scale is directly relevant. In the test, the effectiveness of a "practical" appeal was compared with the effectiveness of a "romantic" appeal in advertising for an unnamed consumer paper product. Mendelsohn reports that the two approaches had equal strength overall. However, when the groups were divided on the basis of their "practical" versus "romantic" attitudes, "it became clear that each subgroup of 'practicals' and 'romantics' was most strongly activated by its own appropriate appeal."[1]

The results of Mendelsohn's experiment do seem to support the hypothesis of this study, but the variables analyzed are not fully defined, with the result that the support is not certain. Although the report does not provide detail it appears that "practical" and "romantic" attitudes

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

are considered as general rather than specific. That is, the audience members were grouped according to their general and enduring tendency to be "practical" or "romantic." The hypothesis of this study, by contrast, is concerned with "practical" and "romantic" as specific variables. That is, in the test situation, did the consumer have a "practical" or a "romantic" goal not in general, but in the paper towel selection situation in particular? Because of this apparent difference, Mendelsohn's study provides only indirect support.

Francis Bourne-- reference groups.- Francis Bourne in his previously discussed research on the influence of reference groups on product and brand selection draws advertising implications that are consistent with the hypothesis of this study.[1] Bourne proposes that buying behavior may be individualistic or it may be socially conditioned. He then demonstrates that which factor will prevail in any given purchase situation can be predicted by measuring the conspicuousness of the product. Products (or brands) which are conspicuous are susceptible to reference-group influence. Bourne then demonstrates this phencmenon with research findings that categorize the primary buying influence as individualistic or social for various products.

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[1] Bourne, op. cit., pp. 207-257.

From these findings, Bourne draws implications that although untested, are consistent with the hypothesis being considered here. He states:

> When neither product nor brand appear to be associated strongly with reference-group influence, advertising should emphasize the product's attributes, intrinsic qualities, price, and advantages over competing products. Where reference-group influence is operative, the advertiser should stress the kinds of people who buy the product, reinforcing and broadening where possible the existing stereotype of users. 1

Although Bourne does not seem to take a strong transactional view--he sees reference groups and product attributes acting on people rather than interacting with goals--his implications nevertheless, are consistent with the hypothesis under study.

editorial style

Support for the hypothesis-- summary.- ~~The few stud~~-ies presented here lend some support to the hypothesis. However, in most cases the most that can be said is that the evidence is consistent with the hypothesis. No study was found in which the hypothesis was directly tested.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 221-222.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPERIMENTAL TEST OF THE HYPOTHESIS

Laboratory Experimentation in Marketing

This analysis has thus far followed the traditional sequence of the scientific approach by first defining the problem and second by formulating a hypothesis. The third step in the sequence, testing of the hypothesis, is the subject of this section of the analysis. The purpose of this step is to gather data concerning the hypothesized relationship to see if, in the test situation, the predicted relationship occurs. If it does, the test data would support, although not prove, the hypothesis. Proof of the hypothesis would require not only much more extensive testing than will be attempted here, but also elimination of alternative hypotheses that might show similar effects.

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In addition to testing the hypothesis, this section attempts to explore a particular testing method that has been refined and widely used in the behavioral sciences, namely the laboratory experiment. This section will first consider the applicability of the laboratory experiment to marketing problems, then discuss the basic elements of experimental design. Finally, using the hypothesis developed

in the previous section, an illustrative application of the experimental approach will be described and results reported.

The nature of laboratory experimentation

An experiment is a method for collecting data concerning the relationship between variables. If the scientific approach is being followed, the experiment is directed to gathering data concerning the relationship between variables that was predicted by the hypothesis.

Experimentation is, of course, only one of many methods that might be used to explore relationships. It has, however, attributes that make it a particularly valuable scientific method. Foremost is the fact that the properly controlled experiment provides more reliable evidence than other methods of the existence and form of relationships. Kerlinger notes:

> . . . the ideal of science is the controlled experiment. . . . The main reason for the preeminence of the controlled experiment . . . is that the researcher can have more confidence that the relations he discovers are the relations he thinks they are, since he discovers them under the most carefully controlled conditions of inquiry known to man. [1]

Rigby notes: "The controlled experiment has proven of invaluable assistance in securing information on relationships

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[1] Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967), pp. 291-292.

and particularly on the form of relationships." He goes on to cite a relevant example of the usefulness of experimentation:

> The social sciences have great difficulty in securing information on the form of relationships to justify universal agreement. The social sciences can secure information on specific events in time but difficulty in securing adequate information on the form of the relationships prevailing. We can indicate what happened to sales in a specific situation when advertising was increased, but we have difficulty in providing information on the form of the relationship which prevailed. Changes in sales could have been related to factors in addition to the advertising or completely independent of the advertising. This problem makes it difficult to establish universal agreement on the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior. We begin to make progress when we can at least isolate all factors but the relationship between advertising and consumer behavior.[1]

In Rigby's terms, then, it is the carefully controlled nature of the experimental method that gives it the ability to verify the form of relationships.

Keeping in mind that control is the dominant feature of experimental research, an experiment might best be described as a research situation in which one variable is manipulated, the effects on a second variable are measured, and, at the same time, all other variables are maintained as nearly constant as possible. If the researcher manipulates variable "A" and concurrent with manipulating "A" he measures

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[1]Rigby, op. cit., p. 193.

the changes in variable "B," then to the extent that all other variables were controlled, he can say that the change in "B" was caused by his manipulation of "A." good

Note the basic elements of the experiment: (1) manipulation of an independent variable, (2) measurement of the dependent variable, and (3) control of extraneous variables.

It is usual and helpful to think of two classes of experiments---laboratory and field. A distinction between the two, as the names imply concerns the locus of the research--laboratory experiments being done in the laboratory and field experiments being done in the field.

However, the distinction between laboratory and field experiments really extends beyond the notion of location, a more basic difference being the degree of control. The purpose of bringing subjects to a central location is not one of convenience for the researcher, but is a means of obtaining control. The purpose of conducting research in the field is to gain realistic, "normal" surroundings. The difference between the laboratory and the field experiment might better be thought of in terms of a scale. The left end of the scale would be labelled "control" and "abstraction" while the right hand side would be labelled "lack of control" and "realism." Laboratory experiments tend to the left of the scale--they sacrifice realism for

control. Field experiments tend to the right of the scale--they are less abstract, but less controlled.

Advantages and disadvantages of laboratory experimentation in marketing

Laboratory experimentation has not been widely used in solving marketing problems, but in the last ten years, there appears to have been an awakening interest in this approach. This interest may stem from the generally increased study of the behavioral sciences by marketers spurred by the success of the motivation researchers. Holloway and White note that marketers have been attracted to laboratory experimentation because of the demonstrated success of this method in the behavioral sciences where many of the problems studied by laboratory experimentation seem similar to problems faced by marketers.[1]

Like any research method, laboratory experimentation has certain advantages and certain limitations. These will be discussed at this point prior to considering the specific elements of research design. In the consideration of research design, a principal objective will be to determine how the advantages of this method can be realized and the limitations minimized.

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[1]Robert J. Holloway and Tod White, "Advancing the Experimental Method in Marketing," Journal of Marketing Research, I (February, 1964), 25.

Three advantages of the laboratory experiment as contrasted to the field experiment will be noted--superior control, replicability, and economy.

Superior control.- It is obvious from the earlier discussion of the distinction between laboratory and field experimentation that the chief virtue of the former is greater control. This attribute is highly important to the solution of some marketing problems. Perhaps the greatest single barrier to the advancement of marketing knowledge is the multiplicity of variables. The superior control of the laboratory experiment offers a way to disentangle these variables and study the effect of a single independent variable on a single dependent variable. By contrast, in the field experiment it is simply not possible to exert comparable control over extraneous variables.

Another way of expressing the benefits of superior control in the laboratory experiment is that this method can offer internal validity. If the experiment is properly conducted, it is possible to determine in probabilistic terms the confidence that we can have that the relationship found is a true one. In the field experiment, it is unlikely that there will be sufficient control of extraneous variables to permit comparable or, in many cases, computable internal validity. Correlational type studies are even weaker in this respect. Not only are extraneous variables not controlled,

but also the independent variable is not manipulated. As a result, it is not possible to be certain whether the second variable observed is the dependent or the independent variable--the cause or the effect.

Superior control is not, of course, automatically present in a laboratory experiment. Rather, this method provides the opportunity to control. How control is achieved, particularly in behavioral experiments, will be discussed in the research design section.

Replicability.- An advantage of the laboratory experiment is that the results can be verified by other researchers since they can duplicate the experiment. The replicability of results stems from the fact that the properly conducted laboratory experiment can and should use highly precise definitions of all elements of the research so that later researchers can duplicate the conditions of the original research.

Again, this attribute of laboratory research is not automatically present, but, rather, it depends upon precise, operational definitions in the research design and procedures.

Economy.- The economy of laboratory research makes it particularly attractive to the academic researcher who is frequently working alone and with limited funds. The laboratory experiment is a means by which the researcher can inexpensively and quickly gather large amounts of data about a particular relationship.

In part the economy of this method results from the highly focused nature of the research. Little time or effort is wasted in gathering extraneous data. Economy is also realized because subjects can frequently be handled in groups, often of substantial size. The general availability of student groups facilitates this type of research by academic researchers.

There are, of course, disadvantages or limitations to the laboratory experiment. These are of interest in research design as features to be minimized. Three limitations will be considered--artificiality, suspicion of intent and strength of effects.

Artificiality.- A criticism sometimes leveled at laboratory experiments is that they are artificial. And, of course, they are. Laboratory experiments are purposely made abstract as a means of controlling extraneous variables. It would be possible to introduce more realism to the laboratory situation, but this, in effect, means introducing more variables. In turn, this jeopardizes control and is contrary to the central purpose of the method.

Kerlinger, commenting on the charge of artificiality, notes:

> When a research situation is deliberately contrived to exclude the many distractions of the environment, it is perhaps illogical to label the situation with a term that expresses in part the result being sought. The criticism of artificiality does not come from

> experimenters, who know that experimental situations are artificial; it comes from persons lacking an understanding of the purposes of laboratory experiments. 1

Another way of viewing artificiality and of contrasting it with the advantage of control is in terms of validity. It was noted under advantages that the laboratory experiment has internal validity because it is controlled. However, the abstraction needed to provide internal validity is at the expense of realistic or "natural" surroundings which would provide external validity. If results do not have external validity, it means, in effect, that the results cannot confidently be generalized to the total population.

Although lack of external validity is a genuine limitation of the laboratory experiment, it is apparent that it is not a problem that can be viewed in isolation. Rather, it must be viewed in combination with the advantage of internal validity. An attempt to improve one of these factors will tend to react unfavorably on the other.

Suspicion of intent.- Another limitation, and one related to the notion of artificiality, is that the subjects in the laboratory experiment are usually aware that they are the subject of an experiment. This may tend to bias

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[1] Kerlinger, op. cit., p. 380.

their responses. In some cases this problem can be ameliorated by various devices that mask the researcher's intent. Even this, however, does not always eliminate the problem of the subject guessing the researcher's intent and answering so as to ingratiate himself to the interviewer. Both careful research design and careful interpretation of results are necessary to limit this problem.

Strength of effects.- A third limitation, considered by some to represent the greatest disadvantage of laboratory experiments, is the weakness of the effects created by manipulation of the independent variables.[1] The desire for stronger effects reflects, in turn, on other characteristics of laboratory experiments. In order to maximize effects, manipulations must often be extreme, inviting the charge of artificiality. In order to avoid masking of the effect that does occur, the level of abstraction is often heightened in order to eliminate variables that might conceal or confuse results. And finally, sophisticated measurement and analysis techniques must be used in order to permit interpretation of the rather small effects that may occur.

In summary, laboratory experimentation has the capacity to be a powerful method for marketers because it

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[1]See, for example, Kerlinger, op. cit., p. 380.

offers scientifically necessary internal validity and replicability. It has practical appeal because of its economy. These advantages cannot be gained without paying a price. The price seems to be external validity. There are other limitations--problems of bias and the readability of results; these limitations must be minimized through proper research design.

Extent of use of laboratory experimentation in marketing

Laboratory experimentation is not widely used in marketing as compared to such methods as the survey, but its use is not unknown. Although it is not the intention here to catalog all known applications, several recent examples of laboratory experimentation will be cited to demonstrate the range of problems for which it has been used.

Applied research.- There is currently some applied research that, although frequently lacking in rigorous control procedures, can be classified as laboratory experimentation. One of the earliest applications was the "consumer jury" technique which was sometimes, but not always, conducted as a laboratory experiment. The consumer jury is a technique in which a representative sample of consumers is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of a number of test ads to which they are exposed.[1]

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[1]Further details are provided in Lucas and Britt, op. cit., p. 415.

In recent years, advertisers, advertising agencies, and commercial research organizations have utilized laboratory experimentation in more elaborate tests of advertising effectiveness. The best publicized of these is probably the Schwerin technique in which groups of consumers are brought to a laboratory (a former motion picture theater) and their responses to televisions commercials measured under partially controlled conditions.[1]

Laboratory experimentation has also been used in a variety of forms to test consumer preferences such as preference between products or packages. A sample of prospective or current consumers is generally assembled at some neutral location, exposed to the test products by some controlled procedure, and preference measured.[2]

Another application of laboratory experimentation has been in a variety of perception tests. The objective of these tests is to evaluate, among other things, the visibility and attention-getting value of alternate designs and layouts. Various mechanical devices are used to manipulate the variables and record the effects. These include tachistoscopes, variations in illumination, measurement of pupil dilation, and recording of eye movements.

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[1]Further details are provided in Patrick J. Kelly, "The Schwerin Model: How You Can Use It to Build Your Share of Market," in <u>Readings in Marketing: The Qualitative and Quantitative Areas</u>, ed. by Philip R. Cateora and Lee Richardson (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 366-376.

[2]Further details are provided in Ferber, Blankertz, and Hollander, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 330-331.

Theoretical research.- Perhaps of more immediate relevance to this analysis has been the apparent increase in interest in and utilization of laboratory experimentation for enlarging the body of marketing knowledge. A noteworthy event in the rising interest in experimentation in marketing was the founding in 1962 of the Center for Experimental Studies in Business at the University of Minnesota. The Center was established to explore and promote the use of laboratory experimentation in marketing. In the first year, six diverse laboratory experiments were underway, including studies of brand loyalty, cognitive dissonance, ethics in advertising and selling, and the effects of product information on family interaction.[1]

A later laboratory experiment by Holloway, director of the Center, explored the relationship of prepurchase information on post-purchase cognitive dissonance.[2] One particularly relevant aspect of this experiment was Holloway's use of role playing as a means of manipulating the situational variable. The subjects were asked to imagine themselves in various situations and to make product choices in terms of that imagined situation. A similar technique will be used in testing the hypothesis of this analysis.

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[1]Holloway and White, op. cit., pp. 25-29.

[2]Robert J. Holloway, "An Experiment on Cognitive Dissonance," Journal of Marketing, XXXI (January, 1967), 39-43.

Another laboratory experiment, again utilizing dissonance theory, was Cardozo's exploration of the relationship between consumer satisfaction with a product and the amount of effort expended to acquire the product.[1] These latter two studies and others point out that there is an incentive to use laboratory experimentation when the hypothesis to be tested is based on theoretical knowledge also gained from laboratory experimentation. This was the case in both Holloway and Cardozo's studies which used dissonance theory. Cardozo notes that use of a laboratory experiment permitted maximum utilization of psychological theory which was itself based upon laboratory findings.[2]

Herrmann and Stewart applied laboratory experimentation to quite a different field of inquiry.[3] They used a highly abstract gambling game to explore consumers' willingness to accept risk in trying new products. Pessemier applied laboratory experimentation to brand loyalty, a concept that has been explored experimentally by others.[4]

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[1]Richard N. Cardozo, "An Experimental Study of Customer Effort, Expectation and Satisfaction," in _Readings in Market Research_, ed. by Keith Cox (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), pp. 365-377.

[2]_Ibid._, p. 366.

[3]C. C. Herrmann and J. B. Stewart, "The Experimental Game," _Journal of Marketing_, XX (July, 1957), 12-20.

[4]E. A. Pessemier, "A New Way to Determine Buying Decisions," _Journal of Marketing_, XXIV (October, 1959), 41-46.

Pessemier had students make simulated shopping trips with the amount of money and their shopping list as manipulated variables.

Another class of problems that has been studied by laboratory experimentation is the effect of communications. The work by the Harvard group under Bauer is illustrative. Since this was reviewed extensively in Chapter III, it need not be repeated here.

These studies mentioned here, all of them done in the last ten years, are indicative of both the rising interest in laboratory experimentation and the breadth of subjects that have been explored utilizing this method.

Problems in Experimental Design

Objectives of research design

A research design is the structure of the data gathering method to be used in an investigation. Its purpose is simply to direct the gathering of data concerning the relationship between variables as stated in the hypothesis under investigation.

It follows, then, that the appropriateness of a research design depends on how well it focuses on gathering data relevant to the hypothesis. There are numerous works devoted entirely to the subject of research design which suggest various design models which are available to the

researcher. While these models may provide suggestions, it is nonetheless true that each design must be custom fitted to the problem at hand. The structure of the research must be designed to focus on the particular hypothesis being investigated.

Although each experimental design will necessarily be different, there are some common principles to be utilized and common problems to be avoided. These are discussed below in terms of the three elements of experimental design defined earlier--manipulation of the independent variable, control of extraneous variables, and measurement of effects.

There is one principle that is noted here as a preliminary because it cuts across each of the design elements. It was noted earlier that one of the advantages of laboratory experimentation is that it is replicable--other researchers can repeat the same study in order to verify the results. This advantage heightens the believability of the results. However, in order to achieve this advantage, it is essential that precise, operational definitions and procedures be provided for each element of the design. These definitions should include each of the variables, the method used to control, and the procedures used for measurement and analysis of effects. To provide replicability, the definitions must be operationalized. That is, the research design should tell what steps or operations are

to be performed in order to measure the variable or follow the procedure. Operationalizing permits later researchers to exactly replicate the study or some element of the study.

Manipulation of the independent variables

In order for a research design to be a true experiment, it is necessary that the researcher have direct control over and actually manipulate at least one independent variable. It is the ability to manipulate one variable and then observe the effect on another variable that gives the experiment the power to show causation or the form of relationships.

This extremely important and distinguishing feature of experimental design can perhaps be clarified by contrasting the experimental design with the *ex post facto* design. Kerlinger notes:

> In ex post facto research, one cannot manipulate or assign subjects or treatments, because in this kind of research the independent variable or variables have already occurred. The investigator starts with observation of the dependent variable and retrospectively studies independent variables for their possible effects on the dependent variable.[1]

Ex post facto research, as contrasted to experimental, yields correlational data which do not provide reliable evidence of causation. The caution to be observed here by the

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[1]Kerlinger, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

researcher is to be certain that if he desires the advantages of the experiment that his design provide for control and manipulation of the independent variable.

A second area of potential difficulty in manipulation of the independent variables concerns the problem of the magnitude of effects. It was noted earlier that one limitation of laboratory experimentation is that the observed effects on the dependent variable tend to be small. One step that should be taken to overcome this problem is to be sure that the values of the independent variable are very different. That is, the research design should assure that the manipulation of the independent variable produces substantial variation so that the effect due to the manipulation is large enough to be separated statistically from chance or random differences.[1]

Control of extraneous variables

Perhaps the most commonly heard comment from detractors of applications of experimentation to business problems is, "You can't put people in test tubes," hence the method is inappropriate. Although this statement is generally left unexplained, one interpretation of its meaning is that because businessmen deal with human beings as subjects, they cannot use the physical scientist's method (the test tube)

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 282-284.

of abstracting the subjects from interfering, extraneous variables. Rigby notes:

> Many have felt that the experimental approach does not provide a meaningful source of data collection for the student of business administration because of the difficulty in controlling variables. The number of variables may be so large as to prevent control or the nature of the variables prevents satisfactory control. Frequently cited is the problem of experimenting with people.[1]

It is in the control of extraneous variables in behavioral experimentation that the behavioral sciences have made great methodological progress from which marketers and businessmen in general can benefit. Because of the great similarity between many marketing problems and behavioral science problems, these means of control are frequently directly applicable in marketing experiments.

Kerlinger notes four ways in which extraneous variables can be controlled.[2] The first way is to eliminate the variable by making all subjects homogeneous with respect to that variable (e.g., use only male subjects if sex of subject is thought to be an extraneous but interfering variable). With this method, it is, of course, not possible to generalize the results beyond the class of subjects tested.

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[1]Rigby, op. cit., p. 184.

[2]Kerlinger, op. cit., pp. 284-286.

A second method of controlling an extraneous variable is to make it non-extraneous by converting it to one of the independent variables. Thus in the above example, both males and females might be included in the sample and the difference in effect between males and females could be measured as well as the interaction between sex and other independent variables.

CONTROL GROUP

The third and fourth means of control, matching, and randomization, utilize control groups. A control group is a group of subjects, as similar to the experimental group as possible, who do not receive the experimental treatment. If the control group and the experimental group are truly alike, any difference in measured effect between the experimental group and the control group must be due to the only thing different between the groups--the manipulated variable. Kerlinger notes that the notion of the control group can be further generalized to include any two similar groups which receive a different treatment of the independent variable.[1]

It can be seen that the use of control groups does not eliminate extraneous variables, but, rather, it offsets them. If the control and experimental groups are alike with respect to all extraneous variables, the difference

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[1] Ibid., pp. 305-306.

in effect observed in the two groups cannot be due to the extraneous variables and thus must be attributed to the manipulated variable. The key to this means of control is, of course, equating the experimental and control groups. The two methods used are matching and randomization.

In matching, the important extraneous variables are determined and then individuals alike in these variables are paired. One member of each pair is assigned to each of the two groups--control and experimental. Thus each experimental member has an offsetting control member. The problem with this method, aside from the difficulty of finding appropriate subjects, is that only a limited number of extraneous variables can be controlled.

A better method of equating the experimental and control groups, and hence controlling extraneous variables, is through randomization. If subjects are selected and assigned randomly to control and experimental groups, then all possible extraneous variables have been controlled. This does not mean that the extraneous variables have been completely eliminated or completely offset. Rather, randomization makes it more likely that the groups are equal. More important, if the groups are randomized, it becomes possible to analyze effects probabilistically and separate chance differences in effect from effects due to manipulations.

Because it provides more complete control and because it permits statistical determination of the significance of

effects, control by randomization is the goal toward which the experimental research design should be directed.

Measurement of effects

The third element of research design concerns formulation of a procedure for measuring changes in the dependent variable. Measurement is concerned with quantifying or assigning numerals to events, such as changes in the dependent variable.

Levels of measurement.- There are four levels of measurement available to the researcher in measuring effects.[1] In ascending order of complexity they are nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. Nominal measurement assigns objects or events to categories--such as men and women or purchased brand "X" and did not purchase brand "X." Ordinal measurement places objects or events in rank order. The ranking of automobiles in terms of price would be an example. Interval measurement is like rank order measurement except that the numerals assigned represent classes with equal intervals. The above automobiles, for example, might be assigned to one of three classes: $1,001 - $3,000; $3,001 - $5,000; $5,001 - $7,000. The highest measurement level, ratio measurement, is similar to interval measurement except that it includes a measurement category of zero.

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[1]This section relies upon Kerlinger, op. cit., Part 6.

The researcher's selection of a measurement method is influenced, of course, by the nature of the objects or events to be measured. Another important consideration, however, is the nature of the arithmetic and statistical operations that the researcher may wish to perform on the results. As one proceeds up the levels of measurement, increasingly sophisticated mathematical and statistical tools can be applied. In ratio measurement, for example, all normal arithmetic operations are possible because there is a zero included in the scale. Nominal measurement is much more limited--cases can be counted and subcategories found, percentages computed, and correlations computed. But analysis of variance cannot be utilized and instead chi-square analysis must be substituted.

Thus in selecting a measurement method, the researcher needs to determine at the design stage what arithmetic and statistical operations will be necessary when the results are at hand.

Recording measurements.- Another difficulty that should be attacked by skillful research design is the danger of introducing bias in the recording of effects. Measurement is usually accomplished by either interviewing, asking the subjects to fill out questionnaires, or by observation.

The standard problems of biasing responses are present in laboratory experimentation as they are in other methods of data gathering. However, certain sources of bias

seem more acute because the subject's awareness that he is being tested is heightened by the laboratory surroundings. It is usually impossible to disguise the fact that the subjects are part of an experiment, but it may be possible to disguise the intent of the research. This in turn may reduce the subject's natural tendency to give the answers that he feels are desired by the researcher if the disguise makes it difficult to determine what the researcher is seeking.

The heightened consciousness of the test situation may increase problems of order bias and "halo effect" or the desire of the subject to appear consistent. If these problems cannot be avoided in the structure of the measurement procedure, the limitations of results should be recognized in the interpretation of findings.

Significance of effects.- An important part of the measurement aspect of research design concerns the methods to be used to evaluate the significance of results.

The distinction between internal validity and external validity was made earlier. Both need to be considered at the research design stage. The ability to measure internal validity is dependent upon other design decisions previously discussed. If subjects have been selected and assigned to groups randomly and if an appropriate measurement scale has been used, it is possible to analyze effects statistically and state probabilistically their significance.

Without randomization, the validity of differences will be unknown and much of the power of the experimental method will be lost.

External validity concerns the ability to generalize the experimental findings to relationships outside the experimental situation. It is rarely possible to generalize with certainty to groups different from those tested. Rather, the researcher should design his experiment using groups to which he wishes to generalize or he should extend his findings by further empirical work. This limitation of laboratory research should be recognized at the design stage so that the results meet any external validity requirement that may exist.

An Illustrative Example of Laboratory Experimentation

This section has considered the applicability of laboratory experimentation to marketing and has discussed problems in experimental research design that appear particularly likely to confront the marketing researcher.

The discussion thus far has been entirely on the level of considering the potential of borrowing experimental methodology as developed and used in the behavioral sciences. At this point, an attempt will be made to apply this borrowed methodology to the specific marketing problem which has also been under consideration in this analysis. Using

the hypothesis developed concerning emotional versus rational appeals, a laboratory experiment will be designed to test the proposed relationship.

In addition to being a convenient means for illustrating the experimental method, application of laboratory experimentation can be justified as being an appropriate method for testing this particular hypothesis. First the method is appropriate because it is practical. Resources in the form of students are available for the experiment and monetary outlay is minimized. Second, the uncertainty of external validity is not a severe problem in this early and exploratory stage of the inquiry. Laboratory experimentation can set the stage for later more projectable field research by verifying and refining the form of the relationship. Third, experimentation is appropriate because evidence is sought concerning a causative relationship. Thus the special ability of experimentation to verify such relationships is needed. And finally, laboratory experimentation is consistent with the nature of the knowledge from which the hypothesis to be tested was developed. Much, probably most, of this borrowed knowledge was based upon laboratory experimentation.

In the remainder of this section, the hypothesis to be tested will be restated and the variables identified and defined. Then a laboratory experiment to test the hypothesis

will be presented. And finally, results obtained when the experiment was carried out will be presented.

Review of the hypothesis to be tested

A hypothesis concerning the relative effectiveness of rational and emotional advertising appeals was developed at length in Chapter III. It is this hypothesis which is to be tested. The hypothesis is as follows:

> The relative effectiveness of a product-performance advertising appeal versus a psychosocial benefit advertising appeal depends upon the perceived usefulness and relevance of the information to the audience in a given situation; product performance appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is utilitarian, psychosocial appeals will be more effective when the consumer's goal is ego-defense or social approval.

The hypothesis has two parts. The first part proposes that the relative effectiveness of the two types of appeals depends upon their perceived usefulness at the time and situation in which the audience member finds himself when exposed. The second part of the hypothesis is an amplification or implication of the first. It proposes that perceived usefulness can be further defined as congruence between the goal desired and the benefit offered by the communication. When the audience member's goal and the communication are congruent (i.e., the communication offers a way to reach the goal the member is then trying to achieve) then the appeal will be more effective. When the goal and the appeal are

not congruent, the appeal will be less effective. It is this second part of the hypothesis which will be tested.

The hypothesis proposed is one of interaction. It proposes that there is no general answer to the question which is more effective, rational or emotional appeals. Rather, it proposes that which one is more effective depends upon the interaction of appeals with the audience member's goals. In short, it states that appeals interact with goals to produce effects.

There are three variables expressed in the hypothesis: (1) appeals, (2) goals, and (3) effects. The independent variables are appeals and goals. The dependent variable is effects.

Categories or values of each variable and the constitutive definitions of each variable were presented at length in connection with the development of the hypothesis. These definitions can be summarized as follows:

> appeal - The first independent variable is the appeal which is the content of an advertising message about a product or service. Two types of appeal were identified. Product-performance appeals are concerned with the physical attributes of the product itself, the instrumental benefits offered by the physical product. Psychosocial appeals describe the psychological and social benefits to be derived from purchasing or owning the product. Psychological benefits are concerned with defense or enhancement of the ego or self-concept. Social benefits are concerned with enhancing acceptance by social groups.

goal - The second independent variable is the audience member's goal, which is the motivated (drive-endowed) expression of an individual's need in a particular situation. The goal is also an intervening variable and a construct. Three categories of goals were identified: utilitarian, ego-defensive, and social. (For purposes of parallelism with the appeal categories, the latter two categories will be combined in the research and contrasted with the first category.) Utilitarian goals are concerned with coping with and maximizing one's relationship to the environment. Ego-defensive goals are concerned with establishing and protecting one's self-concept. Social goals are concerned with building and maintaining satisfying relations with other people and groups.

effect - The dependent variable is the effect which means purchase of the product in the advertisement.

Design of the research

The general structure of the research design to test the information usefulness hypothesis is a 2 X 2 factorial. This design is appropriate when there are two or more independent variables and when it is desired to test the interaction between the independent variables. In this case there are two independent variables, each with two values to be tested. In a factorial design, every combination of independent variables is tested. Thus for this test, two times two or four test groups are needed to test each combination. The general structure of the design can be illustrated by the 2 X 2 diagram below:

APPEAL

GOAL		A_1 Product-performance	A_2 Psychosocial
G O	B_1 Utilitarian	measures	of
A L	B_2 Ego-defensive or social	effect	(purchase)

The experiment is to be conducted among college students. The procedure calls for supervised self-administration of a questionnaire, sample pages from which are shown in Appendix A. There are four versions of the questionnaire, one for each test cell. The questionnaires for all cells are administered at the same time to subjects in a classroom. Other than the heading at the top of the instructions, little attempt is made to disguise the intent of the questionnaire.

Manipulation of variables.- Both independent variables--appeals and goals--are manipulated in the experiment.

Appeals are presented to the subject in the form of advertisements for hypothetical automobiles. Each subject is exposed to two advertisements--one for Car "S," the manipulated ad and one for Car "T," the control ad. The ad for Car "S" is manipulated by presenting only psychosocial benefits in one case and only product-performance benefits in the other case. By presenting only one kind of benefit in each manipulated ad, it is hoped that the variables are drawn apart

and made distinctive. The control ad contains an even mixture of product-performance and psychosocial benefits. The purpose of the control ad is to give subjects a choice between cars and to provide a constant standard for evaluating the effect of the manipulated appeal.

Automobiles were chosen as the subject of the ads in an attempt to make the questionnaire appear realistic to students. Automobiles are a high interest product to students; hopefully this makes the problem posed to them a relevant one.

The second variable manipulated--and one requiring, perhaps, more explanation--is the subject's goal. The research structure requires that the subjects be divided so that two groups contain subjects whose goals are utilitarian while the other two groups contain subjects with ego-defensive or social goals. It will be recalled that there is evidence from the behavioral sciences that an individual does not have only a single goal. Instead, each individual can be viewed as having multiple goals--some utilitarian, some social, and some ego-defensive. Which goal an individual will try to achieve at any given time depends upon the situation in which the individual finds himself. Thus it is essential in determining what an individual's goal is that the question not be asked in abstract, but rather in terms of a specific situation.

One way to divide subjects by goal would be by assignment. Subjects might be presented with a situation and asked

what their goal would be in that situation. Based on the goal indicated, they would be assigned to goal groups. There are two weaknesses in this approach. The first is that by assigning subjects to groups, the power of randomization has been lost. The objective in dividing the subjects should be to assure that the two resulting groups are alike in every respect except their goal. As noted earlier, the only sure way to do this is by random assignment. The lack of randomization jeopardizes internal validity and prevents the use of statistical techniques to determine the significance of differences between the non-random groups.

A second difficulty with the assignment approach is that the questions necessarily asked of subjects in order to classify them would tend to bias later questions designed to measure effect. Since there is a tendency for subjects to try to demonstrate consistency in their answers, later questions tend to be biased by earlier ones. It is important, therefore, that the vital question designed to measure effects be placed first. The assignment method of dividing subjects by goal does not permit this.

A second and the selected method of dividing subjects by goal is to assign subjects to groups randomly and then to manipulate goals. The procedure is as follows. Subjects are randomly assigned to the four groups thus assuring equality of all four groups in terms of all extraneous variables. The

goals of the groups are then manipulated by manipulating the situation through role playing. It will be recalled that it was said that goals are made more or less important by the situation in which the subject found himself. The manipulation procedure utilizes this belief. Two groups are asked to play the role of purchasing agent trainees. This is designed to bring utilitarian goals to the forefront. The other two groups are asked to play the role of a member of a young people's social group. This role is designed to bring social goals to the forefront.

Several additional features of this manipulation should be noted. First, it does not produce groups that are pure--that is, despite the manipulation, each group will contain both subjects with utilitarian goals and those with social goals. What the manipulation does hopefully accomplish is to change the mix of goals so that the desired goal occurs in more subjects in the group. There is a danger in this procedure and it relates to the second point to be noted. Unless the manipulated situations are sufficiently different, the change in the mix of goals may be insufficient with the result that the effects would be unreadable. To some extent, it will be seen that this problem does occur. The third feature to note concerns the relevance of the roles that the students are asked to play. Although it is desirable to make these situations distinctly different so that goals really vary, likewise it is important that the roles be ones that

the subjects understand well enough so that they will permit the desired goals to come to the forefront. The roles of purchasing agent trainee and member of a social group of recent college graduates both seem sufficiently clear for the subjects who are to be junior and senior students in business administration.

In order to attempt some verification of the success of the goal manipulation, the questionnaire closes with a question designed to gain an expression of the subject's goal in the role playing situation.

Control of extraneous variables.- Control in this experimental design is achieved by two techniques. The first is the use of randomly selected control groups and the second is the analysis of effects in terms of cross products.

Control groups occur in this design because there are four different groups of subjects alike in all respects except for the independent variables. Each of these cells can qualify as a control since it receives a different independent variable treatment than the others.

The second aspect of control concerns the way in which these cell effect values are combined to establish control. A long standing problem in any test of the comparative effectiveness of one aspect of advertising has been the inability to make the test ads equivalent in all respects except for the test factor. In this experiment, an attempt was made to

make the test ads equal in all respects except appeal. However the main control over this problem (as well as the similar problem of matching the goal manipulation effectiveness) is to analyze effects in terms of cross products. That is, the effects in the four cells of the experiment are not analyzed separately, but each cell is combined with a second cell that experienced an opposite and offsetting appeal and goal manipulation. In terms of the diagram used earlier and shown again below, the effects from A_1B_1 are combined with A_2B_2 and compared with A_1B_2 plus A_2B_1.

APPEAL

GOAL	A_1 Product-performance	A_2 Psychosocial
B_1 Utilitarian	A_1B_1	A_2B_1
B_2 Ego-defensive --social	A_1B_2	A_2B_2

Since this combination of cells offsets both the variation introduced by differences in the ads and differences in the goals, the question is, if there is a difference in effects, what does it represent? This is a subject of the following paragraphs concerning measurement.

<u>Measurement of effect</u>.– Effects are measured very directly in this design by asking subjects which car they

would purchase in the situation described--Car S, the car in the manipulated ad or Car T, the car in the control ad. (In the statistical manipulations, choosing Car T is also expressed as not choosing Car S.) The measurement scale used is nominal. Subjects are categorized as purchasing S or purchasing T.

The significance of effects is analyzed using the chi-square technique which is a valid technique with nominal measurement. The .05 level is established in advance as the criterion of significance.

The more important point to be covered, however, concerns the question raised earlier--what effect is to be measured? In short form, the hypothesis states that effects will be greater when goal and appeal are congruent than when they are not congruent. Referring again to the 2 X 2 table, cells A_1B_1 and A_2B_2 have congruent goals and appeals. In cells A_1B_2 and A_2B_1, appeals and goals are not congruent. Thus if A_1B_1 and A_2B_2 are combined and compared to A_1B_2 plus A_2B_1, the measurement will compare effects of congruent versus non-congruent goals and appeals.

The hypothesis can be restated statistically as follows:

$$H_1 \ : \ A_1B_1 + A_2B_2 > A_1B_2 + A_2B_1$$

Note that in measuring effects in this way, the differences in ad strengths and goal manipulation strengths are offset as described in the control discussion.

A third question is added to the questionnaire to try to demonstrate the relationship between the first or information usefulness part of the hypothesis and the second part of the hypothesis concerning goal/appeal congruence. Perceived usefulness is measured by asking subjects to designate which ad was more helpful in the test situation--the manipulated ad or the control ad. The purpose is to see if, as hypothesized, ads are perceived as more useful when they are congruent to goals and if they are more effective when perceived as useful. Because of the danger of biased response and the loss of some randomization, responses to this question will be interpreted cautiously.

Analysis of experimental results

The experimental design just described was implemented in January 1969 using as subjects 116 junior and senior business administration students. The class was predominantly male, 99 male and 17 female. One hundred and thirteen questionnaires were completed by the group. (The research was also administered, at a different time, to a group of 51 freshman students. The results were substantially the same as for the larger group of upper classmen and hence will not be considered in the text. Appendix B, however, contains raw data from both experiments.) Random assignment of students to test groups was accomplished by arranging the four versions of the instruction

questionnaire forms in random order by use of a random number table. The forms were then given to students from the randomized stack. The instructions and accompanying advertisement positioned the student in the desired test cell.

An overview of results— the 2 X 2 table.- One way to put the experimental results in perspective is to use the 2 X 2 table form shown as an explanation of the research design, but this time filling in some of the results. This is done in Table 1.

Table 1

PERCENT AND NUMBER CHOOSING CAR "S"
BY GOAL AND BY APPEAL

		Appeals	
		"practical"	"personality"
GOALS	Purchasing agent	97% (29/30)	23% (7/30)
	Graduation present	71% (20/28)	68% (17/25)

Before reading the results, some explanation of the table is needed. First note that the appeal and goal titles now refer to the specific roles and appeals used in the experiment. "Practical" refers to the product-performance appeal while "personality" refers to the psychosocial appeal. "Purchasing agent" refers to the role designed to make utilitarian goals salient while "graduation present" refers to the role designed to bring social goals to the forefront. The

effects are reported in terms of the percent choosing Car "S," the car in the manipulated ad. The figures shown in parentheses indicate the numerical ratio of the number that chose Car "S" to the total subjects in the cell.

This table can be read vertically, horizontally, or diagonally in terms of cross products. Reading first vertically, it shows the expected results. The "practical" appeal was more effective with the purchasing agent group than with the graduation present or social group. Conversely, the "personality" ad was more effective with the graduation present group than with the purchasing agent group.

When the table is read horizontally, the results do not follow the expected path. Looking at those subjects playing the role of purchasing agent, it is clear that the "practical" appeal was more effective than the "personality" appeal as would be predicted by the hypothesis. However, among the graduation present group the appeal of the "practical" and "personality" ads was nearly equal with a slight difference in a direction contrary to expectation. There are three possible explanations for this contradiction--the hypothesis is false, the test advertisements were unequal in factors other than appeal, or the goal manipulation was weak. Each of these possibilities will be considered as the analysis proceeds.

Analysis of the cross products.- The design of this experiment makes it possible to analyze the significance of

the results even if the appeals and goals manipulations were of irregular strength. The hypothesis predicts not in terms of individual cell results, but in terms of combinations of cells--the cross products. It predicts that in those cells where goal and appeal are congruent more subjects will chose Car "S" than will subjects in the non-congruent cells.

To look at this relationship and to facilitate computation of significance, the data are rearranged as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

CHOICE OF CAR BY CONGRUENCE OF GOAL AND APPEAL
(expressed in number of subjects)

	Chose Car "S"	Did Not Choose Car "S"
Goal and appeal congruent	46	9
Goal and appeal not congruent	27	31

$X^2 = 17$ $\quad p < .01$

It is apparent by inspection that the proportion choosing Car "S" is substantially greater when goal and appeal are congruent than when they are not. Computation of the chi-square ratio indicates significance beyond the .01 level.[1]

The experimental finding, then, supports the hypothesis. The main effect measured, the relationship between goal-appeal congruence and product choice was strongly and significantly in the predicted direction.

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[1]The computational method used was based on Robert Ferber, Market Research (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1949), pp. 264--275.

Analysis of appeal manipulation.- In addition to the main effect--the effect of congruence--the strength of the two manipulations can be evaluated. It is apparent from Table 1, the 2 X 2 table, that the "practical" appeal was more attractive than the "personality" appeal. This is more obvious with the data combined for both goals by appeal as in Table 3.

Table 3

CHOICE OF CAR BY AD APPEAL
(expressed in numbers of subjects)

Appeal	Chose Car "S"	Did Not Choose Car "S"
"Practical"	49	9
"Personality"	24	31

Thus one way of explaining the apparent reversal of expectation in the effects in the graduation present groups lies in the possibility that the "practical" ad was stronger than the "personality" ad. It does not explain, however, whether this greater strength was an appeal characteristic or an extraneous characteristic.

Analysis of goal manipulation.- The goal manipulation can be viewed in a manner similar to the appeal analysis, by summing choices by goal group regardless of appeal. This is shown in Table 4.

Table 4

CHOICE OF CAR BY GOAL GROUP
(expressed in numbers of subjects)

Goal	Chose Car "S"	Did Not Choose Car "S"
Purchasing agent	36	24
Graduation present	37	16

The similarity of the proportion choosing Car "S" among both groups seems to indicate equivalence in the strength of the two goal manipulations. However, this combination of cells masks some revealing differences between the two manipulations.

It will be recalled that a question was placed in the test questionnaire to try to shed light on the effectiveness of the goal manipulation. It asked the subjects to indicate what "factor" was most important in their choice of car in this situation--engineering features (utilitarian) or whether it would fit their personal style of life (social). The responses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

EXPRESSED GOAL BY GOAL MANIPULATION GROUP
(expressed in number of subjects)

	Expressed Goal	
Goal Group	Engineering	Personal Style
Purchasing agent	56	4
Graduation present	33	20

This tabulation reveals that the purchasing agent manipulation was highly successful. Fifty-six of sixty subjects indicated that they were trying to satisfy a utilitarian goal. By contrast, the social/ego-defensive manipulation was much less successful. It did manage to increase the proportion of subjects expressing a social/ego-defensive goal, but the group apparently still contained more subjects with a utilitarian goal than with an ego-social goal. The weakness of this manipulation is a practical example of the need cited earlier to really make the variables vary.

The data in Table 5 provide an explanation for the hitherto puzzling reversal of effects in the graduation present goal group. Referring back to Table 1, it is now quite clear why the "practical" ad did better than the "personality" ad with the graduation present goal group. It was simply because there apparently were, in spite of the goal manipulation, a greater number of subjects with utilitarian than with ego-social goals in this group. Likewise it is clear, for example, why the "practical" ad did not do as well with the graduation present cell as with the purchasing agent cell. Even though the ego-social goal manipulation was weak, it did manage to lower the proportion of subjects in the group with utilitarian goals, hence the "practical" ad was less effective.

One more interesting tabulation of this question can be made although the results must be interpreted cautiously

for several reasons. If the subject's statement of most important factor can be accepted as a valid expression of their goal in this particular situation, then the cross products can be restated regrouping the subjects in terms of their expressed goal rather than, as originally done, in terms of the assigned or manipulated group. This is done in Table 6. Clearly the main effect found in Table 2 is still present.

Table 6

CHOICE OF CAR BY CONGRUENCE OF EXPRESSED GOAL AND APPEAL
(expressed in number of subjects)

	Chose Car "S"	Did not choose Car "S"
Expressed goal and appeal congruent	50	6
Expressed goal and appeal not congruent	23	34

But comparison of the two tables also indicates that the effect of congruence is stronger in Table 6 than in Table 2. This is consistent with what has been found prior to this. In effect, regrouping subjects by expressed goal is equivalent to strengthening the goal manipulation and the expected result would be to strengthen the effect of congruence.

As noted earlier, results from use of this question must be interpreted cautiously. The expressed goal question, coming third in the list of questions, may be subject to

bias, particularly the attempt of subjects to justify their previous choice of car. More important, perhaps, the goal groups reformulated by expressed goal are no longer random groups, thus the guarantee that they are alike in terms of other variables has been lost. Still, the effect seen from this manipulation is in the predicted direction and tends to provide interesting corroborative evidence.

Analysis of helpfulness.- A final aspect to be analyzed is the relationship between perceived helpfulness of the ad and effectiveness. Subjects were asked which ad they felt was most helpful to them in this situation. The purpose of this question was to attempt to demonstrate the relationship between the first and second parts of the hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, when the ad appeal was congruent with the subject's goals, the ad should have been viewed as helpful. When appeals were conflicting with or irrelevant to goals, the ads should not have been perceived as helpful.

The data shown in Table 7 indicate that the predicted relationship holds true. The ad for car "S" was more often selected as being helpful when its appeal was congruent with the goal that the situation manipulation was trying to create.

Table 7

HELPFULNESS OF AD BY CONGRUENCE OF AD WITH GOAL
(expressed in number of subjects)

	Chose Ad "S"	Chose Ad "T"	Chose "Same"
Goal and "S" ad congruent	33	6	16
Goal and "S" ad conflicting	25	18	15

It should be noted that here again the weakness of the ego-social goal manipulation weakens the effect shown. It is also interesting that even though in this case the subjects were given the option of saying that the ads were equally helpful, most subjects perceived a difference in helpfulness between the ads.

The warning concerning bias is particularly applicable to this question. Because the question was placed directly after the car choice question, there is probably a tendency to make the car choice and the ad choice consistent.

One more manipulation can be performed using this question. That is, it can be asked, were the people who perceived an ad as helpful more likely to be influenced by that ad. The hypothesis predicts that they would be. The tabulation in Table 8 indicates that the relationship is indeed present and strongly so. The relationship between perceived helpfulness and effectiveness is an extremely important one, because if it could be established that perceived helpfulness were predictive of sales effect, advertisers would have a powerful tool for pre-evaluating advertising.

Table 8 does indicate a very strong relationship between these two variables. However, it should not be viewed as anything more than hopeful information to encourage further research. The data are subject to two important limitations. First is the problem already mentioned that

there may have been a tendency by subjects to make the answers to the car choice and helpfulness questions consistent. A second, and related problem with the data is that they do not show the direction of the relationship between car choice and ad helpfulness. It may be that a particular car was chosen because the ad for that car was helpful.

Table 8

CHOICE OF CAR BY HELPFULNESS OF AD
(expressed in numbers of subjects)

	Chose Car "S"	Chose Car "T"
Ad "S" helpful	54	4
Ad "T" helpful	3	21
Same	16	15

It may also be that an ad for a car was termed helpful because it provided rationalization for a car selection already made. It would require research focused specifically on this question to provide more positive data. However, the hints provided by this research on this issue do encourage further pursuit of the relationship.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETING PRACTICE AND FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has been directed to investigation of two questions. First, it has been concerned with the relative effectiveness of emotional and rational advertising appeals. Second, it has considered the applicability of the theory and methodology of the behavioral sciences to answering questions such as the first one.

The findings relating to these two questions have now been presented. The first question--the question of advertising appeal effectiveness--was analyzed by developing a hypothesis based on existing theory and then testing this hypothesis experimentally. The second question, concerning the usefulness of the behavioral sciences to business problems, was studied by applying behavioral science theory and methodology to the advertising appeals problem. Thus the entire study serves as a case example of this type of research approach.

In the sections which follow, the findings of this analysis will be reviewed to determine what implications they have for marketing practitioners and researchers. First the findings concerning emotional versus rational appeals

and then the usefulness of the behavioral science approach will be considered.

Rational Versus Emotional Appeals---Implications for Marketing Practice

The implications of the findings concerning rational versus emotional appeals will be considered in two parts. First what meaning do the findings have for the marketing practitioner. Second, what additional research do the findings suggest.

Validity of the findings--a review

Prior to drawing implications from the findings, it would be well to again consider the question of the validity of the findings. What reliance can be placed on the results from which implications are to be drawn?

The question of validity must extend beyond the statistical level of significance achieved by the experiment. Of foremost importance to the overall validity of the results is the research approach taken. The reason that the scientific approach was taken was to heighten the validity--the believability--of the findings. The problem <u>was</u> fully defined, a hypothesis <u>was</u> formulated, the hypothesis <u>was</u> based on existing theory, the experiment <u>was</u> controlled by the hypothesis. Each of these methodological steps increases confidence in the findings.

Looking more specifically at the experiment itself, what can be said about the validity of these findings? First, procedures were used to provide internal validity. Control groups were used, the power of random assignment was fully utilized, and statistical techniques were applied to assess the results. These steps were taken to assure that the effects observed were the result of manipulations introduced by the experimenter.

There is, however, another dimension to validity that must be recognized. That is, do the subjects, variables, manipulations, and effects actually represent what they are said to represent? Because laboratory experiments are an abstraction, they are generally susceptible to validity criticism along these lines. The experiment in this study is no exception. The students used as subjects are not representative of consumers in general and hence the findings cannot be generalized to the total universe of consumers. The effect measured was not really sales, but an indication by the subject of which car he would buy in a certain situation. The situation itself was not a real one, but a role that the subject was asked to play. The advertisements that the subjects viewed were not real ads, but merely representations of ads. How can the effect of these abstractions be evaluated? The abstractions were a necessary result of the desire to control the experiment, and it seems likely that they influenced the *specific* effects, the preferences that resulted. However,

the subjects, variables and situation used do not appear so abstract that they distort the form of the relationship. This conclusion is judgmental rather than statistical. Only further testing will prove it right or wrong.

In summary, there are undoubtedly some elements in this experiment that make the results supportive evidence rather than proof. Based on what has been learned from this experiment, ideas for improvement and enlargement have appeared and will be discussed later. However, in spite of the retrospective reservations that have been noted, certain strengths of the findings do emerge. First, the effects measured in the experiment were very substantial in magnitude, exceeding the level of significance established in advance. Second, the effects were in the direction predicted in advance by the hypothesis. Third, the hypothesis was built upon and is consistent with an existing body of behavioral knowledge. Hence the results are consistent with existing knowledge. Thus, while the research done to date must still be considered limited and exploratory, the findings represent an advance over pure intuition and deserve consideration by both practitioners and researchers in advertising.

Rational versus emotional appeals-- implications for marketing practice

It was argued in initially stating the problem of emotional versus rational appeals that this issue was one frequently faced by advertisers. Hence the findings of this

analysis should have implications for the advertising practitioner. Keeping in mind the limitations discussed above, what are the implications of the findings?

First, a basic assumption of this entire study has been that neither emotional nor rational appeals are generally superior, but that either may be best under different conditions. The findings support this belief. In the experiment it was demonstrated that the effectiveness of either an emotional or a rational appeal even for the same product could vary greatly from situation to situation and from person to person. The implication in this for the advertiser is that the issue of emotional versus rational appeals is a real issue. It does make a difference which type of appeal is used. There is no support here for the notion that one appeal or the other is always better.

Second, in searching for factors which determine, for a given situation, which type of appeal will be most effective, it was hypothesized that it depended in part on what goal the consumer was trying to achieve. It was predicted that if the advertisement were relevant and helpful to the consumer in achieving her goal, then the appeal would be effective. The experimental findings support this hypothesis. What is the implication of this finding for advertising practice? It was suggested earlier that the hypothesized relationship could be viewed as parallel to the marketing concept. Just as the decision concerning the nature

of the product to be offered must begin with a definition of the consumer's product need, so, too, should the design of an advertisement begin with a definition of what information the consumer needs in order to satisfy herself that a product will solve her problem. This suggests that the advertiser should make the choice between emotional and rational appeals by going to the prospects for his product and determining which type of information these prospective customers feel would be helpful and relevant.

A third implication, related to the first two, is that consumer goals are not uniform by product class. That is, the market for a product is made up of some people who demand the product to satisfy utilitarian goals and others who demand the same product to satisfy ego-defensive or social acceptance goals. In the experiment this demand for the same product to satisfy differing goals came about because the subjects were placed in different situations. The implication of this finding is that it should be possible to segment markets by the goal that the prospect is trying to achieve. The prospect's situation should be some guide to his likely goal. Furthermore, having segmented the market by goal, it should then be possible, if the prospects could be reached separately, to direct different appeals to each. The appeals, of course, would be selected so as to be helpful to each segment's particular problem. This tailoring of appeals to individual segments should increase total effectiveness of the advertising.

Taking these three implications together, what appears is a decision-making procedure for selecting type of advertising appeal. The steps that have been suggested are these:

1. for a given product market, determine what goals consumers in that market are trying to achieve;
2. segment consumers by goal class;
3. for each goal class, determine what information is needed to help show relevance of product to goal;
4. direct appeals to selected segments congruent with the information needs of the consumers in that segment.

A final implication for advertising practitioners concerns the application of information usefulness as a predictive technique. An implication of the hypothesis is that it should be possible to determine in advance which one of two or more ads will be more effective by asking consumers to rank the usefulness or helpfulness of the ads. It would, of course, be essential that the ads be rated in some context. That is, the consumers would have to rate them in terms of a specific situation. The experimental evidence supporting this implication is only fragmentary. It will be recalled that a relation was found between

effectiveness and helpfulness, but the direction of the relation was not clear, and there was danger of bias due to the positioning of the question. Nonetheless, this implication is brought out here (and again later in considering possible future research) because of the potential importance and great scarcity of reliable predictive techniques in advertising effectiveness.

Rational Versus Emotional Appeals-- Implications for Further Research

One of the greatest values of the laboratory experiment is that, in addition to providing evidence to support or not support a hypothesis, it economically provides leads for further promising research. This exploratory characteristic of laboratory experimentation was a particularly sought after benefit in this study. In this section the direction that further research might take, as suggested by the findings of this analysis, will be considered.

Laboratory or field testing

The selection of laboratory or field testing methods must, of course, depend heavily on the nature of the specific problem to be analyzed. However, the suggestions for further research discussed below will tend toward further laboratory research and further exploration. This may reflect the writer's personal interest or a tendency of laboratory research to beget laboratory research, but there appear to be more substantial reasons than these.

First, the research suggestions will be ones in which, common to most marketing problems, it will be desirable to isolate a few variables from a great many other variables. This means that a high degree of control will be necessary, a requirement that favors laboratory experimentation.

Second, field experimentation has great value in empirical confirmation of relationships which have been well established by more economical methods. But this analysis and the suggestions for further research must still be considered very much at the exploratory stage. There is some support that the hypothesized relationship may exist, but much more evidence would be needed before the relationship could be considered well established.

And finally, there is the issue of economic practicality. The research suggestions discussed below are ones that are derived from admittedly thin data. The economy of laboratory experimentation would make it feasible to explore all of these clues for less than the cost of one substantial field investigation.

Further research-- replications

One obvious suggestion that comes from the experimental support given to the information usefulness hypothesis is to replicate the study to strengthen its support of the hypothesis. In the replication, the experiment would be

repeated in its current form with a change in the source of subjects and perhaps the product. The purpose of this would be to see if the basic form of the relationship held true as product and subject changed. If it did, the generality of the findings would be enhanced.

This is probably a less promising direction for further research than others that will be mentioned. While it utilizes existing research, it does little to build on it or improve upon it. There also seems little likelihood that the results, given a constant technique, would show a different form of relationship.

Further research--consumer goals

The nature of consumer goals and the relation of purchase behavior to those goals appears to offer a rewarding area for further investigation. Although this study has offered some promising categories of goals, the relationship of goal to situation, of product to goal, and of typology to goal is not explored although there are some indications that relationships do exist.

The laboratory experiment that was conducted also reveals a need for more sophisticated treatment of goals. A method needs to be devised for drawing the subject's goals farther apart in order to reduce the problem of mixed goal groups experienced in the experiment reported in this study. Further, the method used should attempt to increase the

validity of the goals. Greater assurance is needed that it is actually goals that are being measured and not a false response caused, for example, by a desire to ingratiate the researcher.

There is no indication from the findings thus far that subjects should be divided into goal groups by assignment rather than by manipulation. On the contrary, the experiment indicated that manipulation of goal is feasible, thus providing a way to overcome the disadvantages of assignment.

The question, then, is, how can the manipulation of goals be improved? One possibility might be to substitute some sort of shopping game for the role playing. If the game were reasonably complex, the subjects could project themselves into it so that the goals that emerged would do so in a more natural way, yet still be within a controlled context. Goals might be controlled by a reward system that provided incentive to seek social approval or utilitarian benefit. The complexity of the game could also be used to disguise the intent of the researcher. A further possibility for the game approach would be to vary task complexity as a third independent variable. This would permit relating the results to work done by London and Lim,[1] Hochbaum,[2] and Gergen and Bauer.[3]

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[1]London and Lim, op. cit., pp. 75-89.

[2]Hochbaum, op. cit., pp. 678-687.

[3]Gergen and Bauer, op. cit., pp. 411-427.

A disadvantage of the approach suggested above is the loss of economy. A game approach of the complexity described would require substantially greater financial and man-hour support than the simplified approach already conducted.

Further research--- predictive value of usefulness

The potential value of information usefulness as a technique for predicting advertising effectiveness was discussed under implications for marketing practice. As noted there, the experimental support for the predictive value of usefulness ratings is thin, but supportive. This would appear to be a fruitful area for further research.

The hypothesis to be tested would simply be if, for a given situation, an advertisement is rated as superior in helpfulness, then in that same situation it would be superior in effectiveness. The hypothesis might be tested by dividing subjects into two equal groups. The first group would rate test ads in terms of usefulness. The ads would be exposed to the second group to determine their effectiveness. The relationship between usefulness and effectiveness would then be examined.

Good

The tests would have to be conducted, for both groups, in the context of some situation. Either role playing or some type of game might be used to establish the situation.

A second and similar approach would be to again use two groups. The first group would be asked to specify, for a given situation, what information they would like to have about a particualr product. This information would then be used to prepare an advertisement. This ad and other control ads would then be tested for effectiveness using the second group.

GOOD

Further research-- the bias toward utilitarianism

In the experimental results reported in this analysis, there is a bias toward utilitarian goals and toward product-fact advertising appeals. That is, it was easier to bring out utilitarian goals than social/ego-defensive goals, and overall, the product-fact appeal was more effective than the psychosocial appeal. This does not contradict the principal finding that goal-appeal congruence leads to enhanced effectiveness. This is a relationship between variables, an interactive effect. The bias toward utilitarian goals and product-fact appeals is concerned with asymmetrical values of the independent variables.

There are several possible explanations for this bias. First, the bias may be due to the test situation. With the test situation undisguised, the subjects may have felt that it was either more ingratiating or more socially acceptable to behave in a utilitarian way. Lucas and Britt report a similar phenomenon in opinion testing of advertising.[1] They note that subjects tend to discriminate against persuasive

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[1]Lucas and Britt, op. cit., pp. 434-435.

ads and to favor statements of plain facts. Hovland noted a similar effect in the effectiveness of armed forces indoctrination films.[1]

A second possibility is that the utilitarian bias relates to the particular product tested, in which case the bias might change or even reverse if other products were involved. It may be that automobiles are a highly satisfactory solution to many utilitarian problems, but only a mediocre solution to social or ego-defensive problems. Bourne's work on the variations by product in social group influence tend to support the possibility of variable bias by product, although his hypothetical structure would not tend to predict the particular direction of bias found for automobiles in this study.[2]

Another possibility is suggested by the work of Copp, Sill and Brown and the work of Lionberger on the use of information sources by farmers in adopting new products or processes.[3] They found that different media are used by consumers for different purposes. Farmers rely on the mass media for initial information and product facts about a new process.

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[1]Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, op. cit., pp. 100-101.

[2]Bourne, op. cit., pp. 207-257.

[3]James H. Copp, Maurice L. Sill, and Emory J. Brown, "The Function of Information Sources in the Farm Practice Adoption Process," Rural Sociology, XXIII (June, 1958), 146-157; Herbert F. Lionberger, Adoption of New Ideas and Practices (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1960), pp. 25-31, 43-50.

However, before adoption of the process, the farmer relies on information from fellow farmers about the applicability of the process to his particular area. Other media are used at various stages in the adoption process depending upon the perceived validity of their information. Applying this to a consumer purchase situation, it might be reasoned that consumers perceive an advertisement as a more legitimate source of product-performance facts than of social information. The most legitimate source of information on the social or ego effect of a product would be one's peers, thus personal influence is more effective in this case.

A final possibility to be suggested is that the bias attaches to the particular subjects selected. The business students, mostly male, may simply have been biased toward practicality.

A reviewer of these data suggested two additional possibilities that have implications extending beyond the question of a utilitarian bias. The first suggestion is that the bias toward utilitarian ads observed in this experiment resulted from the use of all-copy advertisements. Psychosocial appeals, it is suggested, may be made largely through non-verbal means such as illustrations and color. If true, it suggests that the utilitarian bias in this experiment reflects the weakness of the psychosocial ads as compared to the utilitarian ads. There is some support for this idea in the previous analysis of the strength of the

two advertisements. (See Table 3) However, this line of reasoning does not explain the apparent bias toward utilitarian goals.

The second suggested explanation of the utilitarian bias argues, in effect, that it is illusory. It might be that the business student subjects, trained in rationality, may have expressed utilitarian goals and may have selected product-fact appeals because they felt that it was socially acceptable to do so. This suggests that rather than a bias in goals or appeal attractiveness, the bias was in the measurement of these variables. However, this explanation seems unlikely since similar results were obtained in testing a group of freshmen not trained in the rational approach.

The test results do not provide data to either support or disprove any one of these possibilities. However, some rather simple experiments might provide some good clues as to the real reason. Some of the possible answers contain important implications for both theory and practice.

Further research--the mixed versus focused ad

Although it was not an objective of the research, the experiment provides some interesting side information on the relative effectiveness of ads that focus on a single appeal versus ads containing mixed appeals. If the term "appeal" is considered broadly, all the ads for Car "S" in the experiment were focused ads. The appeals were either slanted toward product facts or toward psychosocial, but not

evenly balanced. The ads for Car "T," the control ads, contained a more even mixture of product-fact and psychosocial appeals. Combining the results of all four test cells, so that the goal and appeal manipulations are roughly offset, the "S" ad with focused appeals is nearly twice as effective as the "T" or mixed appeal ad. (The actual count is 73 chose Car "S" and 40 chose Car "T.")

To an advertising practitioner these results would probably not be surprising. One of the maxims of sound copywriting has long been to give focus to ads--to try to do only one job per ad. However, some communications research findings suggest a counter view. Cartwright, based on his study of advertising for war bonds concluded that "The more goals are seen as attainable by a single path, the more likely that a person will take that path."[1] One interpretation of this is that the more appeals that an ad contains the more effective it will be. Such a multi-appeal ad would provide one argument for almost everyone and more than one argument for many.

The experimental results, of course, do not support this latter idea. However, the results cannot be greatly relied upon. They were a by-product of the research and are lacking in control. However, it would be quite feasible to

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[1]Cartwright, op. cit., p. 303.

test focused versus mixed ads, and, again, the results would be of both theoretical and practical interest.

Usefulness of Behavioral Sciences for Marketing Problems

In addition to examining the issue of emotional versus rational appeals, this study was designed to explore the usefulness of behavioral science theory and methods for the solution of business problems. This was done by utilizing behavioral science theory and methods in the analysis of emotional versus rational appeals. This means that the research design on this second level problem was a case study. Such a design has the advantage of describing a concrete and specific experience, of providing a realistic test. However, care must be taken in generalizing beyond the specific test case.

Behavioral sciences as a source of theory

Looking first at the usefulness of the behavioral sciences as a source of theory, several conclusions emerge from this particular study application. First, the quantity of findings applicable to this problem was substantial. A review in particular of the hypothesis formulation stage of this analysis will confirm the substantial quantity of findings that contributed to building a basis for the information usefulness hypothesis.

Another encouraging observation was that the sources utilized presented the findings in understandable language. A persevering business researcher, who is willing to read broadly enough to provide himself a behavioral knowledge background, should find the research findings in this field well within his understanding.

On the other hand, one factor that makes the business researcher's task more difficult is the lack of unity in behavioral knowledge. There is not a single dominant school of thought, but, rather, a number of overlapping, sometimes conflicting schools. The difficulty that the researcher from outside the field has is to appraise the standing of these various theories. In dealing with this problem in this case, two helpful approaches emerge. One is to recognize and take advantage of the fact that although different schools of thought may conflict in some respects, frequently they agree on the nature of many phenomena. To the extent that this area of agreement is relevant to the business researcher, he has no problem of reconciliation. In fact, the agreement by various schools tends to strengthen the validity of the findings. The point here is that the business researcher can often make more progress by seeking the areas of agreement rather than trying to reconcile areas of conflict in the behavioral sciences.

A second helpful approach to the various schools of behavioral thought is to recognize that frequently they do

not conflict, but instead they look at common phenomena from different points of view. This does not make one approach right and another wrong. The test that should be applied is one of usefulness. If the business researcher asks which one of the ways of looking at the phenomena is helpful in terms of this particular problem, often the choice between schools of thought is eased.

Another observation that emerges concerns the now much discussed question of validity. Laboratory experimentation is widely used by behavioral scientists and it seems safe to say that these experimental data are the prime support for a majority of the hypotheses in the field. It has frequently been noted that the behavioral sciences are built on a foundation of college sophomores. This widespread use of laboratory experimentation naturally raises the question of validity. One observation that was consistently supported in reviewing these behavioral findings was that internal validity was almost always considered, with statistical measures applied to such an extent that considerable precision was implied. The treatment of external validity was just the opposite; it was virtually never discussed. Yet, the problem of external validity is probably the more important one even though it is more difficult to control and measure.

The purpose of pointing out this validity problem is not to discourage use of behavioral findings, but to

encourage realistic reliance on these findings. It is sound research procedure to formulate hypotheses from existing knowledge rather than intuition. But this study indicates that knowledge is relative, not absolute. The behavioral "knowledge" that was utilized in this analysis consists of things that are known not absolutely, but are known with greater assurance than would be a guess. The fact that the findings in this study are consistent with prior behavioral knowledge lends validity to the findings and also reflects back favorably on the validity of the prior knowledge on which they were based.

In conclusion, the experience of this case was that the behavioral sciences were a fruitful source of applicable knowledge. While the problems of validity must be kept in mind, building on existing behavioral findings made possible a more advanced hypothesis and added credibility to the experimental findings.

Laboratory experimentation as a research method

This study also serves as a case example of the application of a particular behavioral research method--laboratory experimentation. The advantages and disadvantages of laboratory experimentation have been discussed at length in earlier sections and need not be repeated here. What can be added here is some comment on what contribution the method made to this particular study.

The first contribution made by the laboratory experiment was support for the hypothesis. It was possible in this case to devise and conduct a test and relate the results to the predicted results. It has not been suggested that no other test method was possible. What was suggested and demonstrated by the actual experiment was that laboratory experimentation offered a unique combination of attributes--the ability to reveal causative relations, the capacity to control extraneous variables, and economy in execution. Each of these attributes was a requirement of this particular situation and each was realized in the application of the method.

Problems of external validity, a common problem in laboratory experimentation, did exist in this application. These limitations were pointed out. They represent a sacrifice that must be made in order to gain the advantages of the method. Based on the experience gained from this experiment, means were suggested by which the validity could be improved in further experiments.

A second contribution made by the application of laboratory experimentation in this case was that the findings suggested further areas for research. This is potentially the richest reward that the method offers. As mentioned above, the experience of conducting the experiment suggested refinements in the technique that might be applied if this study were repeated or a similar one conducted. Equally

important, the experimental findings were a rich source of suggestions for further research. Four specific research suggestions derived from these findings were discussed.

APPENDIX A

Consumer Research Bureau
Box 1875
Daytona Beach, Florida

Dear Student:

The purpose of this survey is to learn something about people's preferences in certain circumstances. You are asked to imagine that you are in the situation described below and to answer the questions as though you were actually in the situation described.

You are asked to imagine that you have recently been graduated from college and have taken a position as assistant purchasing agent in a local corporation. You have recently completed a company training program on effective purchasing techniques. As one of your first jobs, you are asked to select a new automobile to be used by the company's messenger service. The company's messengers will use the new automobile for mail and package deliveries and for miscellaneous errands. Most of the driving is local with occasional trips to nearby cities.

You have narrowed your choice to two car makes--Car S and Car T. Their prices are approximately the same. Prior to making your decision, you see an advertisement for Car S and one for Car T. These advertisements are shown on the following page.

HERE'S A CAR THAT'S

100% PRACTICAL

CAR "S"

Take a look at these <u>features</u>

* tops in economy - 25 miles per gallon even in city driving
* fast, dependable service from a network of trained dealer mechanics
* extra carrying capacity - 50% larger trunk and fold down rear seat for large packages
* sturdy automatic transmission ideal for stop and go city driving
* new "weather-guard" ignition for dependable starts even in wet or cold weather
* by actual survey, best trade-in value of any car in its price class

A CAR BUILT TO

DO THE JOB

AT LAST! A SENSIBLE

STYLE LEADER

CAR "T"

Just look at what it offers

* your choice of new sport colors - custom striping makes this car shout personality
* colors come in new ever-gloss epoxies - no polishing or waxing for five full years
* powerful big cube engine lets you drag with the best of them
* yet kind to your pocketbook - thrives on lower-cost regular gas, goes farther between oil changes
* exclusive clean line design marks you as one of the style leaders - your ticket to acceptance in any group
* but designed with a common sense view - plenty of room for bundles

THE CAR THAT'S TOPS IN SERVICE

TOPS IN CLASS

Consumer Research Bureau
Box 1875
Daytona Beach, Florida

Dear Student:

The purpose of this survey is to learn something about people's preferences in certain circumstances. You are asked to imagine that you are in the situation described below and to answer the questions as though you were actually in the situation described.

You are asked to imagine that you are about to be graduated from college. One of your wealthy relatives has given you a graduation gift of money to purchase a new automobile. You have accepted a position as a management trainee in a local corporation, starting as soon as the school year is over. You anticipate that you will use the car for driving to and from work. More important, since you are single, you anticipate substantial use of the car for social occasions with the many friends that you have in the area.

You have narrowed your choice to two car makes—Car S and Car T. Their prices are approximately the same. Prior to making your decision, you see an advertisement for Car S and one for Car T. These advertisements are shown on the following page.

HERE'S A CAR THAT'S

PERSONALITY PLUS

CAR "S"

Look what this car will do for you
* a long list of exciting options lets you customize your car to express your tastes
* long, low styling that marks its owner as a member of the up-front, younger generation
* up-to-date exterior with vinyl roof, double racing stripes down the side
* luxurious deep-pile interiors that reflect your style of life
* big displacement V-8 engine puts you "in-charge" with power to spare
* voted the most wanted new car among people under 30

A CAR FOR PEOPLE

WHO LIKE PEOPLE

AT LAST! A SENSIBLE

STYLE LEADER

CAR "T"

Just look at what it offers
* your choice of new sport colors - custom striping makes this car shout personality
* colors come in new ever-gloss epoxies - no polishing or waxing for five full years
* powerful big cube engine lets you drag with the best of them
* yet kind to your pocketbook - thrives on lower-cost regular gas, goes farther between oil changes
* exclusive clean line design marks you as one of the style leaders - your ticket to acceptance in any group
* but designed with a common sense view - plenty of room for bundles

THE CAR THAT'S TOPS IN SERVICE

TOPS IN CLASS

1. If you were in the situation described on the first page, which automobile would you select?

Car S ______________ Car T ______________

2. Which one of the two advertisements did you think was most helpful to you?

Ad for Car S __________ Ad for Car T __________

About the same __________

3. In this situation, which factor would you say was most important in your choice of automobile?

The engineering and other features of the car itself ____________

How well the automobile would fit in with your personal style of life ____________

APPENDIX B

EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS FOR TWO GROUPS - FRESHMEN AND JUNIOR/SENIORS - (IN NUMBERS OF STUDENTS)

Question: 1. If you were in the situation described on the first page, which automobile would you select?

	Freshman Group	Junior-Senior Group
A. Car selection by ad appeal		
"Practical" ad		
Chose Car "S"	17	49
Chose Car "T"	4	9
"Personality" ad		
Chose Car "S"	7	24
Chose Car "T"	17	31
B. Car selection by goal group		
"Purchasing Agent" goal		
Chose Car "S"	11	36
Chose Car "T"	9	24
"Graduation Present" goal		
Chose Car "S"	13	37
Chose Car "T"	12	16
C. Car selection by goal-appeal congruence		
Goal and appeal congruent		
Chose Car "S"	18	46
Chose Car "T"	8	9
Goal and appeal not congruent		
Chose Car "S"	6	27
Chose Car "T"	13	31

Question: 2. Which one of the two advertisements did you think was most helpful to you?

	Freshman Group	Junior-Senior Group
A. Most helpful ad by goal/appeal congruence		
Goal and appeal congruent		
Chose ad "S"	10	33
Chose ad "T"	4	6
Chose "Same"	12	16
Goal and appeal not congruent		
Chose ad "S"	8	25
Chose ad "T"	8	18
Chose "Same"	3	15
B. Car selection by most helpful ad		
Ad "S" most helpful		
Chose Car "S"	14	54
Chose Car "T"	4	4
Ad "T" most helpful		
Chose Car "S"	0	3
Chose Car "T"	12	21
Ads "S" and "T" same		
Chose Car "S"	10	16
Chose Car "T"	5	15

Question: 3. In this situation, which factor would you say was most important in your choice of automobile?

	Freshman Group	Junior-Senior Group
A. Expressed goal by goal group		
Purchasing agent group		
Expressed "engineering"	18	56
Expressed "personal style"	2	4
Graduation present group		
Expressed "engineering"	15	33
Expressed "personal style"	10	20
B. Car selection by <u>expressed</u> goal-appeal congruence		
Expressed goal and appeal congruent		
Chose Car "S"	23	50
Chose Car "T"	4	6
Expressed goal and appeal not congruent		
Chose Car "S"	1	23
Chose Car "T"	17	34

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David W. Nylen was born on May 3, 1931, in Rhode Island and attended public schools in that state until 1948. He completed high school in Clearwater, Florida in 1949 and subsequently enrolled at Duke University. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from that institution in 1952 and was elected a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He attended the Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration from 1952 until 1954 and was awarded a Master of Business Administration degree, being graduated "With Distinction."

From 1954 through 1957, Mr. Nylen served in the U.S. Navy. After completion of Officer Candidate School and Navy Supply Corp School, he served as a Supply Officer, with sea duty in the Far East. In 1958-1959, following release from the Navy, he served as Research Associate at the Harvard Business School, writing cases in marketing and advertising. Numerous of his cases have been published in case collections.

From 1959 to 1965, Mr. Nylen was associated with the New York advertising agency of Needham, Harper, and Steers, Inc. During this period, he rose to the position of Vice-President and Account Supervisor, with responsibility for

several major consumer packaged-goods accounts. He also supervised several successful new product introductions. In 1965, he was named Assistant-to-the-President for the First National Bank at St. Petersburg, Florida with special responsibility for long-range planning and management organization. In January, 1967, he enrolled at the University of Florida to pursue the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics and Business Administration. He worked as a graduate assistant, teaching part-time in 1967, and in July, 1967, he was awarded a Graduate School Fellowship for the following school year.

In September, 1968, Mr. Nylen accepted a position as Assistant Professor at Stetson University where he currently teaches in the School of Business. Mr. Nylen resides in Daytona Beach, Florida with his wife and two children.

This dissertation was prepared under the direction of the chairman of the candidate's supervisory committee and has been approved by all members of that committee. It was submitted to the Dean of the College of Business Administration and to the Graduate Council, and was approved as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

June, 1969

John B. McFerrin
Dean, College of Business Administration

Dean, Graduate School

Supervisory Committee:

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